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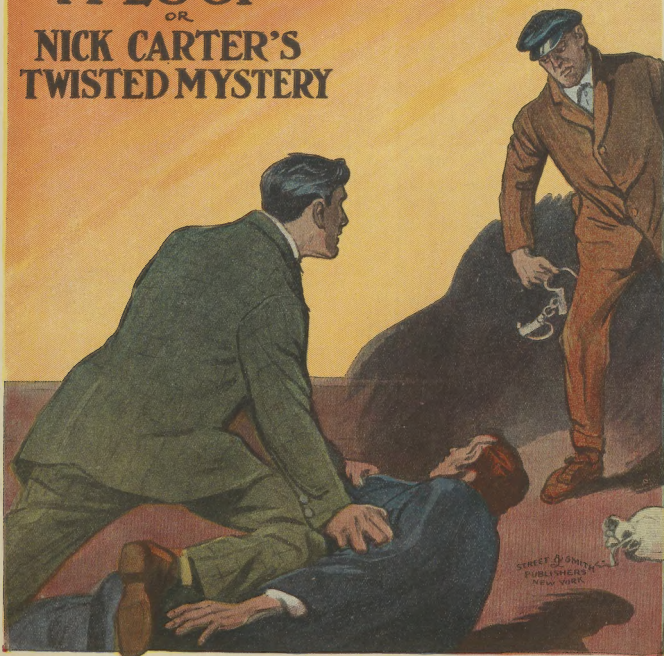
5 CENTS

Nick Carter Stories

SIX MEN IN
A LOOP

OR

NICK CARTER'S
TWISTED MYSTERY



STAND CAG. 65. 1871

NICK CARTER STORIES

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No. 128.

NEW YORK, February 20, 1915.

Price Five Cents.

SIX MEN IN A LOOP;

Or, NICK CARTER'S TWISTED MYSTERY.

Edited by CHICKERING CARTER.

CHAPTER I.

RIBERO'S TALE OF WOR.

"Say, chief! Here's a friend of ours from Siam."

Chick came into the library of Nick Carter's Madison Avenue home in New York, holding a card and grinning. "Who is it, Chick? Not the king?" questioned the detective of his chief assistant.

"Next to it," was the reply. "Look!"

Nick Carter read the card and raised his eyes in some astonishment.

"Señor Ribiero!" he exclaimed. "The prime minister of his majesty—or practically that. I never did know exactly what Ribiero's official title was. But he's about as near to the king of Siam as any of his subjects ever get, I reckon. Where is he?"

"In the reception room. Shall I bring him in?"

"Of course."

Hardly had Chick had time to say anything in the outer chamber, when a dark-skinned little man, carefully dressed and well groomed, dashed into the library and shook hands effusively with the detective.

"My dear Mr. Carter! I'm very glad to find you at home."

"I'm glad to be here, señor," returned Nick, as he gave his visitor a chair. "Bangkok is a nice city, and Siam has many attractions not to be found in our colder climate, but, after all, home is home, and I like New York."

"How long have you been back?"

"We came straight home from Bangkok, my assistant and I—that is, as straight as we could. We spent two days in Yokohama and Tokyo, where I had some business, and remained a week in California. But I have been in New York two months."

Having said this, the detective waited for Señor Ribiero to explain why he had come. Nick did not suppose he had taken the trouble to call just to say "How do you do?"

"I wish it had been convenient for you to remain in Bangkok longer than you did, Mr. Carter. That might have saved some difficulty for his majesty's government."

Nick might have remarked that the government of his majesty of Siam was none of his business. But he didn't. He waited for something else that would make Ribiero's mission clear.

"You remember that the gems you turned over to me from the mines up the Meinam River were valued at over four million dollars, American money?" asked Ribiero.

"Rather more than that, I believe," returned Nick. "If I recollect, they were worth nearly five millions."

"Possibly. They were never appraised, officially. The point is that we have lost them."

"Lost them? Lost those stones?"

The note of astonishment in Nick Carter's voice was real enough. It was hard to believe that such a thing could have happened.

"Yes, Mr. Carter. They are gone. And what makes it bad for me, is that I blame my own carelessness to a large extent."

The detective merely nodded and looked at Señor Ribiero to continue.

"I kept the jewels in my private office, locked in what I considered a perfectly secure place, instead of taking them at once to the treasure vaults in the king's palace," explained Ribiero.

"Why did you do that?"

"I had used them as evidence in the prosecution of four members of the 'Red' Clancy gang whom I charged with stealing them, and it was more convenient to keep the stones at my elbow than to stow them away in the vaults."

"The four men were acquitted, I understand."

"Yes. There was nothing definite against them, although morally their guilt was clear enough to me. Red Clancy had the stones on him when he was killed, but none were

found on any of his men. So they managed to slip through the net."

"And now they have been stolen again?"

"Yes."

"You suspect these members of Red Clancy's crowd—the Loop gang?"

"There is nobody else to suspect. It is true that the men disappeared a day before the robbery. But that is nothing. They may have been hanging about Bangkok, waiting for a chance, and after the theft it would be easy enough for them to keep in hiding in some of the boats in the river. There are too many of them to be searched thoroughly."

"Besides, they would go from one boat to another while the searching went on," suggested Nick.

"Exactly. How or when they finally left Bangkok I have never been able to find out. But they have never been seen there since, and, as they were Americans, it is probable that they are in New York."

"Why do you think they are in New York? They belonged to Chicago originally," remarked Nick.

"I stopped in Chicago on my way here," answered Ribiero. "The police assured me none of the gang were in the city."

"Why were they so sure?"

"It seems they are so well known that they would surely have been picked up if they had stayed there."

"Anything else?"

"One of the men of the criminal classes in Chicago who are employed by the police as spies—"

"Stool pigeons," threw in Chick.

"Yes," nodded Ribiero, with a smile. "That is what the chief called them, I remember. He said that Joe Greene had gone to New York."

"Greene was the name of one of the gang, I recall," said Nick Carter. "Have you the names of the three others?"

"Yes. I got them all at the time they were put on trial in Bangkok," answered Señor Ribiero, taking a notebook from his pocket. "Here they are. Hank Vaughan, Phil Levy, and Dave Callahan."

The detective copied the names of the four men on a pad of paper before him and glanced inquiringly at his visitor.

"That is all I have to tell, Mr. Carter. The stones, valued at four million five hundred thousand dollars in American money, were stolen three months ago, and I am commissioned to offer you five hundred thousand dollars if you recovered them all, or a proportionate amount for whatever you may get."

"If I get any, it is probable that I will get them all," observed Nick. "I promise nothing, however. Shall you remain in New York for some time?"

"For two months, at least. My address is the Hotel Supremacy," returned Señor Ribiero. "If there is anything I can do to assist in your investigations, Mr. Carter, I am always at your service. You do not promise anything, but I feel sure that you will accomplish all that his majesty or I could desire. I feel as if the stones were already in our possession."

Nick Carter smiled and shook his head modestly.

"I would not be too sanguine, señor. You have not heard anything of Ralph Stanton, have you? He is the man who is supposed to have stolen the gems from the Great Pagoda in Bangkok, Wat Chang."

"I believe he took those," answered Ribiero quickly. "But I have no reason to connect him with these other

uncut stones that the Loop gang had, or have. If you get the four and a half million dollars' worth, I shall have hopes of recovering those from the pagoda afterward. But at present I am giving all my thoughts to the more important robbery. Have you any more questions?"

"No, I think that is about all," answered Nick. "If I should be fortunate enough to recover the gems, we shall have to arrange for the punishment of the thieves in Bangkok. There will be some questions of international criminal law involved, but we will cross that bridge when we come to it."

Señor Ribiero bustled out, and Nick sat in reflection for nearly an hour. He was smoking a cigar that he had reached for from his table drawer as soon as he was alone with Chick.

The latter said nothing. He knew the signs when his chief was turning a case over in his mind. Never did he venture to disturb Nick Carter's train of thought by a more or less trifling remark.

"Chick!" called out the detective suddenly, without looking up.

"On deck!" reported Chick.

"All right. I want you!"

Nick Carter wrote a message on a telegraph blank and held it out to his assistant.

"Read that message, will you? Then hustle down to the telegraph office and tell them to rush it."

Without a word, Chick took the telegram and read the following:

"To MARMADUKE POWERS, New York *Guardian*, Park Row: Meet me palm room Supremacy, seven to-night, third table on left. STANTON."

"What's the idea, chief?" asked Chick. "Think Stanton—or Grantley, rather—is in this?"

"I am going to find out, if I can. Marmaduke Powers is in New York, I find, and where he is there is usually a movement in jewelry. He hasn't done anything particular since he got out of Sing Sing, and I think he's about due."

"And he and Grantley have worked together before. That's so," remarked Chick. "Still, I didn't think Grantley would have anything to do with the Loop gang, after what Red Clancy did to him in Siam."

"If there is profit in it, Grantley would deal with anybody," returned Nick. "Hustle with that telegram! You won't let anybody see it except the clerk."

"I wouldn't show it to him if I didn't have to," was Chick's parting response, as he went out.

Nick took up the telephone and called up police headquarters. He got Lieutenant Ironstone on the wire.

"Hello, lieutenant! This is Carter—Nicholas Carter, Madison Avenue. . . . Yes. Wish you'd have your men go to all the pawnbrokers and joints where jewels might be. Let them look for uncut stones. . . . More than four million dollars' worth altogether. . . . Yes, it's a big thing, of course. Don't expect to find all of it. But if we get on to some, we shall know how to go after the remainder. . . . Yes, let me know what you find out. . . . Thank you. Good-by!"

He looked at his watch when he had hung up the receiver, and muttered thoughtfully:

"Half past three. Guess I'll run down to Maiden Lane and see Potter. If there has been anything big doing in stones, cut or uncut, lately, he ought to know."

CHAPTER II.

SOME DIAMONDS AND RUBIES.

In one of the old-houses in the heart of the diamond and jewelry district was the importing firm of Potter & Son, and Nick found the head of the house, old Samuel Potter, in his private office at the rear of the dark store.

"Hello, Nick! It's good to see you down here below the police dead line," was Potter's jovial greeting, as the detective entered. "What's in the wind that you wouldn't tell me over the telephone wire?"

"I never tell anything over the telephone wire of any importance when I can help it," returned Nick. "There is not much danger of leakage that way, but I prefer to meet my man face to face."

"Lots of men you meet face to face would rather not, I guess," laughed Potter. "What can I do for you?"

"I want to ask you the condition of the market," answered Nick, as he glanced at the door to make sure it was closed and fastened by its spring lock. "Particularly as to diamonds and rubies."

"The market is fairly steady," was Potter's reply. "What shall I tell you in detail? Put your questions."

"Well, how do the figure of supply and demand compare with, say, this month last year? How does that comparison go for the last six months? Are there any big lots coming on the market, or is the supply normal? Are big sales being made or not? Is the quality as usual, or have there been any particularly fine specimens offered lately?"

"Whew!" laughed Potter. "It looks to me as if you want a complete résumé of the precious-stone market condensed into about twenty minutes' conversation."

"That's about it."

"It's a tall order, Nick. But I'll do what I can. The market will, I think, show a trifle more activity now than in the corresponding month of last year. But that is solely attributable to natural causes. So far as I can recollect, the last six or eight months will show a normal tone. You see, diamonds—and rubies, too—are a stable commodity. The demand does not vary much, except for extraordinary causes."

"And there have not been any extraordinary causes, I assume?" asked Nick.

"Well, yes, there have been," was Samuel Potter's slow reply. "In the past few weeks I have picked up some fine specimens of diamonds and two particularly good rubies. The diamonds are blue white, except one, that is absolutely white. Their brilliancy will be remarkable when they are cut and polished."

"And the rubies?"

"The rubies are even better than the diamonds, if that could be possible. As with the diamonds, there must be the polishing and cutting to bring out their beauty. But I can see even now that there is a depth of coloring and a fire in those rubies that are never seen in such stones unless they come from a certain quarter of the globe—in the valleys of the Himalayas."

"Have you any of those stones handy?" asked Nick.

"Yes."

Turning to a large safe at his elbow, Potter took from it a small bag of chamois leather. Untying a cord that secured the neck of the bag, he turned it upside down on his flat, baize-covered desk.

A stream of white and red light came from it—a hurly-burly of magnificent diamonds and rubies.

Nick picked up one of the rubies and examined it closely through a magnifying glass which was part of Samuel Potter's desk equipment.

A glance was sufficient to show him that they had come from the jungle district above Raheng, near the Meinam River, in Siam.

"Did you pick these up in the regular course of business, through the usual channels?" he asked coolly.

"No, indeed," said the gem merchant. "I got them through an outside source. And between you and me, Nick," he added, after a quick look at the door, to make sure it was closed, "I didn't insist on knowing their pedigree."

"Ah! Some individual brought them to you."

"That's it. He said his name was Ralph Stanton."

The detective did not allow himself to show any excitement, although the name sent a thrill of anticipation through him.

"He was a stout, puffy man, wasn't he, somewhere in his forties?" he asked, in an offhand manner.

"No," laughed Potter. "On the contrary, he was rather tall and lean, with high cheek bones and a square jaw, and he was not much over thirty, I should say."

"That so?" responded Nick. "I don't know him, then. At first the name seemed somewhat familiar. After all, it is not such an uncommon one. Are any of these stones for sale?"

"What else would I have them for?" smiled Potter.

"I wish you would not sell them for a week or so."

Samuel Potter—a business man before all else—elevated his eyebrows.

"Do you realize, Nick, that I have two hundred thousand dollars tied up in this bag? Several of those stones are so large and brilliant that they will bring almost any price I choose to put on them. If a customer were to come in, I should not like to hold him off."

"I have a good reason for asking you not to sell them," insisted the detective, with a steady look into the merchant's eyes.

"Very well," came slowly from Samuel Potter. "If I get a customer, I will not let him have any of these stones till I have communicated with you. How will that do?"

"Excellent," answered Nick. "You don't know where this man, Ralph Stanton, lives, I suppose?"

"Indeed I do. He gave me his address. You don't suppose I am dealing with anybody on as big a scale as this without knowing how to get at him, do you?"

"Where is he?"

"He has a country place up the Hudson, on the heights of Stonecrag. It is called Joy View. From what I hear, it deserves its title. They say it is a joy to stand on the front porch of that house and sweep with the eye the surrounding country. There is a view of the Hudson for more than twenty-five miles."

"Above Tarrytown, isn't it?"

"Some distance."

"I know where it is. Stanton has not always lived there. Old General Brenidge built the place for himself ten years ago, and died within a year of its completion. I thought it was still unoccupied."

"Stanton took it only about three months ago, so he said."

"I may be up that way in the course of a week or two,"

remarked Nick. "I believe I used to know Stanton. Haven't seen him since I was in Siam. Good-by, Potter. Thank you for what you have told me."

"Don't mention it," was the response. "Only—I would rather that you did not talk about these stones to anybody—unless you have some business reasons for doing so."

"You can trust me," replied Nick as he got up to go. "If there is anything about these stones that is at all irregular, I will let you know. By the way, did you pay cash for them?"

For a moment Samuel Potter did not answer. He had the natural reluctance of a business man to let his affairs be even guessed at.

But Nick was an old friend of his. Moreover, the detective was a man not easily deceived. So Potter burst out, with a great air of frankness:

"Well, no, Nick, I didn't, to tell you the truth."

"Did you pay anything?"

"Ten thousand dollars."

"And you owe about ninety thousand dollars still?"

"Seventy-five thousand."

"I see. You expect to sell the stones for two hundred thousand, I suppose?"

"A quarter of a million, at least. They are marvelous gems, of pure water and brilliancy. I ought to get five hundred thousand dollars," declared Samuel Potter, as his salesman's instinct rather ran away with him. "Why, that one ruby—"

Nick interrupted him with a laugh.

"All right, Potter. That's enough. I'm not going to buy them, so you need not waste your eloquence on me. When are you to pay the balance of seventy-five thousand to this—er—Ralph Stanton?"

"In sixty days from the time of the sale. That is a little more than thirty days from the present date."

"Are you to pay the whole seventy-five thousand then?"

"No. Twenty-five thousand."

"I understand. And the next twenty-five?"

"Sixty days afterward, and the last twenty-five thousand sixty days after that."

"Fairly easy terms for you," said Nick, with a smile.

"Oh, I don't know! My money may be tied up in these things for years, as I explained to Stanton. I'm giving him more than he gives me. He gets all his money in a short period, and he knows it will be paid when it is due. But where am I?"

"On the brink of ruin, of course," laughed Nick. "That is the way with all you business men. Everybody is making money in a deal with you except yourselves. But all right. You won't dispose of any of these stones until you have seen me?"

"That's understood. Here's my hand on it, Nick."

The two shook hands, and Nick knew he could depend on Samuel Potter. As with all business men of good repute, his word was inviolable.

Honor above question is, and always has been, a price-less commercial asset.

CHAPTER III.

THE THIRD TABLE TO THE LEFT.

"Well, Chick," said the detective as he found his assistant in the library, "send the telegram?"

"Yes. To the office of the *Guardian*."

"That will do. Powers will get it. I have reasons for

knowing that, through a friend on the *Guardian*, Powers gets some of his mail there. Get into your evening clothes. Fix up properly to dine at the Supremacy."

"With Señor Ribiero?"

"No, with me."

Chick did not look particularly pleased, although he left the room at once to dress as he had been told.

The fact was that Chick liked to take dinner, either comfortably at home or at some place where there was not quite so much glitter, sweldom, and what he called "bubdub," as at the Supremacy.

His own expression was that the Supremacy was so rotten with money that it was a wonder it didn't fall apart.

Nick understood his assistant's sentiments, and he indulged himself with a quiet smile as he dressed for the evening in his own room.

"Poor Chick!" he muttered. "He'd rather have a steak and onions in a rough-and-ready chophouse than the finest banquet the Supremacy ever spread. I wish I could educate him to enjoy a good dinner. But I suppose his early training will prevail. For myself, I like a well-cooked meal of good provisions, properly served."

Nick was not sybaritish at all. But he had the liking of an educated man of the world for the refinements of life, including a well-served dinner amid pleasant surroundings.

It was exactly six-forty-five when Danny Maloney, Nick Carter's chauffeur, drove up with the big motor car that was the detective's favorite vehicle in front of the quiet house in Madison Avenue.

When the car stopped at the porte-cochère of the Supremacy ten minutes later, there was a rush of liveried attachés of the hotel to help the detective and his assistant to alight.

Nick and Maximilian, the head waiter in the magnificent palm room of the Supremacy, were old acquaintances. So, when the detective entered with Chick, Maximilian led them directly to the third table on the left of the brilliant apartment.

The detective had telephoned to the hotel during the afternoon that he wanted that table, and it had been saved for him, notwithstanding many attempts on the part of other patrons to take possession.

"We are quite gay, chief, aren't we?" observed Chick as he settled his neck in his high collar and wished it were the custom to dine in a fashionable New York hotel in a soft outing shirt, without any collar to speak of. "Look at the swell women on parade. They beat anything we saw in Bangkok."

Nick did not reply. He was busy with the waiter, ordering a dinner that increased the respect that functionalary had for the quiet man with the keen eyes, because of the judgment and discernment he displayed in the selection of dishes.

The sure way to the reverence of a waiter is to order a dinner with taste and skill. It is a gift possessed by comparatively few men. Nick Carter was one of that few.

The two detectives attacked their meal with the gusto of hungry men, and Chick gave little attention to anything but the table, when Nick uttered a peculiar cough.

As Chick looked up he saw that his chief was carelessly stroking his chin with one finger.

"Hello!" muttered the assistant. "What's up now?"

He glanced across the wide aisle as he read his chief's signal, and was just in time to see a tall, lean man, with high cheek bones and a square chin, seat himself at a table opposite to their own.

"Marmaduke Powers!" muttered Chick. "Well, he doesn't know us, anyhow."

The newcomer wore evening clothes and was immaculately groomed—he would not have been welcome in the Supremacy palm room in any other attire—and glanced furtively about him.

Nick recognized the man at once as the person who had sold the diamonds and rubies to Samuel Potter, if the latter's description was accurate, and it did not astonish the detective to find that the vendor of the stones and Mr. Marmaduke Powers were one and the same person.

"Ralph Stanton, eh?" thought Nick, bending over his plate. "I should like to know just how much Stanton really has to do with this robbery. And this man Powers? Where does he come in? What about the Loop Gang? I have those four names—Greene, Vaughan, Levy, and Callahan—and yet they don't appear in this game. Well, I'm glad I've seen Mr. Powers, anyhow."

Powers sat back in his chair, gazing uncertainly about him, while a waiter stood patiently at his elbow, pad and pencil in hand, ready to take his order.

"There's the third table on the left," Powers was thinking. "But Stanton isn't there. I don't know who those two people are. They must have grabbed off the table before Stanton arrived. But if so, where is Stanton? It seems to me that I— Eh? What?"

The waiter had moved a little to the front of him, and Powers became aware of his presence.

Glancing over the menu, Powers ordered a few dishes almost at random. Then he told the waiter to bring him a dry martini cocktail first—and quickly.

Nick and Chick were quite unknown to Marmaduke Powers, and he had no suspicion, as he grumbled at them to himself for taking Stanton's table, that one was the famous Nicholas Carter, whose name was a terror to the kind of people with whom Marmaduke associated, and that the other was his almost as well known lieutenant, Chickering Carter.

Powers kept on looking at his watch, much to the amusement of Nick, who seemed to be entirely taken up with his dinner, and at last, when it was nearly eight o'clock, call the waiter and asked for his bill.

"Given it up!" observed Chick, under his breath, across the table.

"He would have to do so sooner or later," returned Nick as he leaned back and lighted one of his own perfectos, while the waiter held a match.

For a few moments the detective puffed luxuriously, until he was certain Marmaduke Powers was going out. Then he nodded to Chick.

"You know what to do," he said quietly. "Better not lose any time."

Chick slipped out of the room, got his overcoat from the boy in charge of the outer garments in the corridor, and sauntered carelessly through the lobby of the hotel after the disappointed Powers.

Nick Carter sat, dreamily smoking, and appearing not to observe anything. That there was nothing in the large palm room that escaped his keen eyes need hardly be said. Also, his mind was working busily.

When he got up, at the end of half an hour, and, taking his coat and hat from the boy, gave him a tip that provoked a more than usually earnest "Thank you!" he was the typical well-to-do New Yorker who would have no business on his mind till the morrow—perhaps not then.

His car was called up to the entrance, and Danny Maloney sat, statue-like, at the wheel while a hotel servant held the door for the owner, and then, after a whispered word from Nick, gave the laconic instruction: "Home!"

A faint flicker of surprise appeared in Nick's eyes as he entered his library and found Chick there already.

"Well?" he queried as he threw off his overcoat and sat down.

Chick answered the single word promptly.

"Our man went out of the hotel and walked along till he got to Broadway. Then he dropped into a telegraph office not far from the Metropolitan Opera House and sent a message."

"To whom?" asked Nick. "I suppose you know?"

Chick grinned and shrugged his shoulders.

"It was part of my job to know," was his reply. "I managed to be behind him when he wrote his telegram, and I sent one myself, addressed to a dummy name. That gave me the chance to see what he wrote. I couldn't see the message itself, but I caught the name and address. It was to Thomas Shaw, Stonecrag-on-the-Hudson. Isn't Thomas Shaw the name Asa Beveridge worked under once?"

"I thought you wouldn't forget that, Chick," smiled the detective. "So Powers telegraphed him at Stonecrag? That's the nearest town to the place where Ralph Stanton is living, according to information I picked up this afternoon."

"That so? I didn't know that."

"Probably not. I didn't tell you," was the composed response. "The point is that Asa Beveridge is living near Ralph Stanton. Now, are they friends again, or is Beveridge keeping a close eye on Stanton to get even with him for trying to kill him in Siam?"

"It might be either," returned Chick. "Stanton—or Grantley, whichever you want to call him—thought he had killed Beveridge when he left Bangkok, didn't he?"

"We'll continue to call him Stanton," declared Nick. "I am glad Powers does not know me. I didn't appear in that case that took him to Sing Sing, although I had something to do with sending him there. It struck me then that I might find it convenient for him not to recognize me on some future occasion."

"Do you think Beveridge and Stanton are in this diamond game?" asked Chick.

"It looks to me as if all three might be mixed up in it," answered Nick Carter musingly. "Then there are the four members of the Loop gang. It is a complicated case. But I think we shall find in the end that the ruffians who did the actual rough work of taking the stones are under the domination of stronger minds."

"What is the first thing to do?"

"Find out where the stones are, and then get them," replied Nick dryly. "I believe we are on the right track. In fact, I feel sure of it."

"Don't you think we ought to get to Stonecrag and see what Marmaduke Powers is doing there?"

"Why do you think he will be doing anything there?" asked Nick, with a quizzical smile.

"Because he will know there is some slip-up when he did not find Grantley—or Ralph Stanton—at the Hotel Supremacy to-night, and he is likely to go and ask Shaw if he knows anything about it. You'll find, I think, that Shaw and Powers are giving Stanton the double cross."

Nick Carter slapped his assistant on the back and laughed aloud.

"Well done, Chick! Your powers of deduction are improving. At all events, your conclusions are my own. It is my idea that the four Loop gangsters, Joe Greene, Hank Vaughan, Phil Levy, and Dave Callahan, got hold of the stones from Señor Ribiero's office in Bangkok."

"That's my notion," threw in Chick.

"When they had the stones they did not know how to handle them. They worked their way home to the United States, and probably thought they would sell their swag in Chicago."

"They didn't do it there. I feel sure," interrupted Chick, with a positive shake of the head.

"No. I am satisfied of that. The police of Chicago settled that question for me. When the rascals got to New York they ran against Asa Beveridge, and he had enough on them to make them take him into partnership."

"With Beveridge getting the big end, I reckon."

"We'll find that out later," returned Nick. "It seems certain that Beveridge wasn't in a position to handle the stones personally, and he called in Marmaduke Powers—"

"Who is sure to get his full share, too," put in Chick.

"And, for reasons of their own, they have made their headquarters outside of New York City, where they can keep an eye on Grantley."

"Why? What has Grantley to do with it, do you think?"

"That I don't know yet. But I will. It is probable that he heard of the stealing of the stones after he left Bangkok, and has a suspicion where they are. If that is so, it is easily explained why Marmaduke Powers and Asa Beveridge—under the name of Thomas Shaw—are on their guard against him. We will go up to Stonecrag to-morrow."

"I was expecting that," responded Chick.

CHAPTER IV.

THE QUIET MR. JOHNSON.

Nick Carter had a great deal to do in New York on the following day, for he always had several cases on his books, so that it was late in the afternoon when he and Chick got off a train at the pretty little station of Stonecrag and stretched themselves luxuriously as they walked down the long platform.

The station was at the foot of one of the range of steep hills that border the Hudson River. At first glance, a stranger getting off a train at Stonecrag would wonder why a stopping place for trains was there at all, for no signs of human habitations were to be seen.

But a closer look at the thickly wooded slope would reveal a roadway, arched over by great trees, which wound sinuously to the top of the mountain, with many other roads branching off to the beautiful but isolated mansions that were used as summer residences by so many New Yorkers.

As a further indication of population among the moun-

tain forests, three private motor cars were outside the station, waiting for expected passengers to various homes.

Only one of these cars was brought into use now. Two ordinary-looking, well-dressed men, who might have been anything, from millionaire bankers to dignified upper servants, got into the car together and were whisked up the winding road out of sight.

One of the men was smooth shaven; the other had a heavy mustache.

The only other passengers to alight from the train were Nick Carter and Chick.

"Don't seem to be any public hacks," remarked Chick.

"Never mind. We can walk," was Nick Carter's unconcerned reply. "We don't want to be noticed too much, and it is all the better for our purpose that there are not two or three inquisitive drivers to take us from the station. You're not tired, are you, Chick?"

A look of scorn was all the response Chick vouchsafed to this. Nick laughed as he swung away from the gravel drive and walked down the road to where there was a wide opening in the thicket of tall trees, followed by his assistant.

The road ran parallel with the railroad for some little distance. A stone wall, to prevent vehicles from running off and being dashed to destruction below, had been built along one side of the road.

Soon, however, the road turned sharply to the left, away from the wall. Then it took its way straight through the dense forest, which seemed as if it might be in the heart of the Adirondacks, instead of within almost speaking distance of New York City.

"We are going to Grantley's place, I suppose?" ventured Chick, when they had been toiling onward and upward for nearly half an hour. "What do you intend to do there? Go right in and charge him with having the stones?"

"Hardly that," returned Nick. "It would not do to put him on his guard at the beginning. I want to make sure he really is living at Joy View."

"But what about Marmaduke Powers and Shaw—or Beveridge? We don't even know where they live."

"We shall find out," answered Nick coolly.

Even as he spoke, they swung around a curve in the road and came into view of a small house or bungalow half hidden by its own shrubbery.

This bungalow did not appear to belong to a particularly wealthy person. There was not much of a lawn in front of it, and Nick observed that the wooden porch was cheaply made, and that the two windows, with the door between, were plain and inexpensive.

It looked like the country home of a man who was obliged to keep a cautious eye on his purse.

"We'll inquire here where Mr. Stanton's home is," suggested Nick. "Then we shall find out who lives here."

"You know how to get to Joy View; don't you?" asked Chick.

"Yes. But the people in here won't know that. I'm glad we don't look at all as we did at the Supremacy last night, in case we run against Powers, and I don't think there is much fear of Beveridge recognizing us if we should find ourselves interviewing him."

Nick had taken the precaution to disguise himself with a heavy beard and mustache and to dress in a rather baggy suit of loud checks. He looked like a horse dealer,

which was what he had aimed at in selecting his raiment and making up his face.

As for Chick, with a cap pulled well down over his face, and a sweater, he was not at all the trim young man he generally appeared. He would have passed for an employee in a livery stable in attendance on the dealer.

Chick and his chief both seemed fairly to reek of horses.

"You understand, Chick," he warned his assistant, "that we want to find Mr. Stanton, to talk to him about some horses we have to sell—in case it should be necessary to make any explanation of our business."

"That's all right," was the response. "Talking horse is one of the best things I do."

They were going straight to the front of the bungalow, when a new plan came to Nick.

"We'll go around to the back first," he told Chick. "I don't see any one about, and it may be that we can find out who lives here without having to ask. That would suit me better than asking questions."

Chick nodded acquiescence, without speaking, and they skirted through the wood, until they approached the house from the rear.

"There's a light in one of the windows," remarked Chick.

"I see it. The back door is a little open, and there's a light showing there, too. Stand back. I'll go and take a look."

As he spoke, Nick went to the back of the house as silently as possible. Stepping upon the low porch, he peeped in at the open door.

He saw that the light came from a room on one side of the hall that ran through the building from front to back, as is often the arrangement in a bungalow.

It did not surprise him very much that one of the three men seated around a table, on which burned an oil lamp, had been a passenger on the train which had brought him and Chick from New York.

It was just getting dark outside, the thick branches of the tall trees hastening the end of the day. In the house it would have been almost impossible for any one to make out the features of another person close to him.

Nick smiled as he told himself that he would have no trouble to listen to what these men were saying if he believed them to be honest men and respectable citizens.

"As one of them is Marmaduke Powers and another my old friend, whom I last saw in a Siamese jungle, Asa Beveridge, I think I am justified in doing a little eavesdropping," he continued inaudibly. "I wish I could get a good look at the face of that other personage. There is something familiar about him, but I fancy he must be dressed differently from usual."

He stepped into the hallway, and, as the door of the room was not quite closed, he could not only look in at the three men, but could hear what they were saying.

One thing he did not understand. That was that, whereas two men had been in the motor car which had brought this one up from the Stonecrag railroad station, besides the chauffeur, the second man was missing.

"Did you have a pleasant ride up from the station, Mr. Johnson?" Beveridge was saying in an offhand way.

"Oh, yes; it was all right," replied the man whom Nick did not recognize. "My friend here, who brought me

up, Mr. Powers, pointed out the beauties of the scenery as we came along."

All three laughed, plainly intimating that the scenery had not interested them very much. At the same moment the detective knew that the man with the heavy mustache in the motor car had been Marmaduke Powers.

"You are sure no one knew you at the station or on the train, Powers?" asked Beveridge, with some anxiety.

Marmaduke Powers stuck the big mustache on his lip, completely changing his appearance, and looked at Beveridge challengingly.

"Do you suppose anybody who knew me even very well would have recognized me with this ornament on my upper lip?" he demanded.

"It is a good disguise," smiled Beveridge. "But now, Mr. Johnson, what do you think of the proposition?"

"Let me hear what it is," was the cautious rejoinder.

Johnson was a shrewd-looking man of about fifty. He had the prosperous bankerlike aspect that induces confidence at once. To this look, as well as to undoubted business ability, he owed his present comfortable position in the world of crookdom.

For Jeremiah Johnson was one of the busiest receivers of stolen jewelry, especially precious stones, who operated in either New York or any other big American city.

So smart was he in his own criminal line that the police never had been able to prove a case against him.

It seemed almost a paradox. That he handled hundreds of thousands of dollars' worth of gems every year, they were certain.

But there is a difference between merely knowing a thing of this kind and proving it to the satisfaction of a jury. Jeremiah Johnson never had been put on trial.

He dressed well, his manners were quiet and gentlemanly, and he was as "straight" in his particular way as any respectable business man who would be willing to lay his affairs open to the world.

On the other hand, Mr. Johnson insisted on from fifty to seventy-five per cent profit on most of his transactions. What is more, he often got it.

If you were a thief, and desired to dispose of your booty to Mr. Johnson quickly for spot cash, you could accept his terms—or go somewhere else.

As there was no "somewhere else," it will be understood that Johnson was quite safe, and that the deal nearly always ended in his having his way there and then, with the customer walking off with cash in his pocket.

He had been requested by Marmaduke Powers to come to Stonecrag, and it is pretty certain that on the journey he had wormed enough out of his traveling companion to know what the proposition, in a general way, was likely to be.

"I'll close the door," remarked Beveridge.

"All right, Mr. Shaw," agreed Jeremiah Johnson. "It might be as well. Though it is rather close in here, too. You are not afraid of any one listening, are you? I thought you were in the house alone."

"I am. I keep only one woman to do the work about this place. She is the wife of the chauffeur, and they live in a cottage a quarter of a mile away. The woman goes away immediately after dinner in the evening, and I don't see her till breakfast time. I have telephonic communication with the cottage, of course, so that I can get the car whenever I want it."

Asa Beveridge—known at Stonecrag as Thomas Shaw—said this while closing and bolting the door, near which Chick was hiding.

In coming back he almost brushed against Nick Carter, who had stepped into a small recess at the head of the cellar stairs, prepared to dash down out of sight if Beveridge should seem to be suspicious.

"Now, Mr. Johnson," he said as he returned to the room, "I think we can proceed to business."

"That's what I want," rather curtly returned Jeremiah Johnson.

CHAPTER V.

MAKING A BARGAIN.

"Perhaps you know that I have been away from the United States for some time," began Beveridge.

"I did know it," was the reply. "You have been in Siam—part of the time in Bangkok, and also up near the Himalaya Valley."

Asa Beveridge evidently was taken aback by the extent of Johnson's knowledge of his movements, while Nick, peeping through the half-open doorway, smiled. It did not surprise him to hear that Johnson knew where so active a crook as Asa Beveridge had been secluded for the past six months.

"Well," continued Beveridge, recovering his equanimity as quickly as he had lost it, "I have some big business for you."

"H'm!"

"Do you want it?"

"That depends," was the answer, in a careless tone, as Johnson leaned back in his chair, his hands in his pockets. "What have you?"

"I'll tell you," returned Beveridge, leaning across the table and speaking in a low tone. "I know where there is the biggest bunch of rubies, with a lot of diamonds, that you ever saw in one place."

"Where did you get them?" was Johnson's response to this. "I haven't heard of any big jobs lately."

"I didn't steal them, if that's what you mean," snapped Beveridge.

"No? Then why all this mystery?"

Beveridge laughed. He had not quite recovered his temper, but he realized that the ice-cold Johnson would not care one way or the other.

"You know something about Siam, and the ruby and diamond mines there, don't you?"

"It is my business to know," was the answer, with a shrug.

"And you are aware that the king of Siam claims all the stones that are found?"

"I am aware of it, of course. That's a pretty nice thing for the king. He must be getting rich," returned Johnson, with the ghost of a smile.

"He is. But he and his ministers and agents are not smart enough to prevent other people taking a little of the sugar, too."

"I understand that now and then some one grabs off a few rubies and diamonds. I'm told the king has their heads cut off with a sword if he catches them."

"They didn't cut off mine."

"So I observe," was the saturnine rejoinder. "I'll have to help you out with this proposition of yours, I can

see. You'll never get down to business the way you are going."

"I was going to say——"

"I'll tell you what you were going to say," interrupted Johnson. "You have managed to get some stones from the jungles of Siam, and now you've got them you find them a little too hot to hold. So you want to sell them."

"That's what you say," returned Beveridge in a sullen tone.

"I say it because that's what you mean. Well, I suppose you know it will be a great risk to sell any of those stones."

"Why? The king of Siam has no jurisdiction in New York."

"You don't know where his jurisdiction extends, my dear sir. There are many ways of collecting revenues that never appear in official reports. How much do you value these stones at?"

"I didn't say that the stones were mine," was Beveridge's rejoinder.

"You said you had a big bunch of stones, didn't you?"

"No. I said I knew where they were."

"Where are they?"

"That is my business until they are sold. I am only an agent for somebody else. What will you pay for some very fine rubies, and a lot of diamonds that are larger and purer than most you could find in New York, even in the most important diamond houses?"

"I'd like to see some of them," said Johnson carelessly.

"I'll show you a ruby, and you can judge from that," offered Asa Beveridge.

"Very well. Let me see it."

Beveridge glanced around the room, and hesitated for a moment as if half inclined to cross it and close the door at the other end. But he was comfortably seated a long way from the door, and he was confident nobody was in the house but himself and his two companions. So why take the trouble?

It was fortunate for Nick that Beveridge was disposed to be a little indolent. The detective was at this door, and he desired very much to see the ruby.

Beveridge took from an inner pocket what looked like a crumpled bunch of tissue paper. When he opened it up a large ruby fell upon the table.

"Is that the ruby?" asked Johnson, picking it up.

"Yes."

"Came direct from the mines?"

"Yes."

"It has been well polished, and in a general way I should say it had been used for ornamentation somewhere. But of course if it came from the mines direct, its polish must have come by accident."

Nick Carter had caught a glimpse of the ruby, and he was listening intently to the conversation.

"The polish did not come by accident," snapped Beveridge. "I have had some of the stones worked on, so that the owner of them could see what he had, and to let whoever might buy them assure himself as to their fire and splendid color."

"I see," muttered Johnson.

The "fence" took from his pocket a very strong magnifying glass and held it over the ruby under the light of the shaded lamp. As he gazed, a slight grin spread over his respectable countenance.

Nick Carter smiled a little, in sympathy with Jeremiah

Johnson. The detective thought he knew what had amused Mr. Johnson. It gave Nick a clew for which he had been seeking.

"So this came from a mine, without being used anywhere?" remarked Jeremiah Johnson as he returned the magnifying glass to his pocket.

"That's what I said."

"Very well. Now what does the owner of these stones want for them?"

"The full value, less twenty per cent, as your commission," was Asa Beveridge's prompt reply.

"Twenty per cent?"

Jeremiah Johnson repeated this in a high voice, and with a scornful smile.

"That's what the owner wants."

Johnson got up from his chair, and turned to Marmaduke Powers.

"Mr. Powers, how are we to get down to the station? Will Mr. Shaw let us have the use of his car?"

"Wait a minute," interposed Beveridge. "We haven't done any business yet."

"And we're not likely to," rejoined Johnson. "I'm a busy man, and I should like to be in my office in New York at my regular time in the morning. So I shall have to make one of the night trains from Stonecrag."

"But why this hurry? There are several trains. Doesn't my offer satisfy you?"

"Satisfy me? Ha, ha, ha!"

There was no mistaking the sarcasm in Jeremiah Johnson's laughter.

"Well, what would you consider?"

"Fifty per cent."

Now it was Beveridge's turn to laugh, which he did, as raucously as he knew how to do it.

"Fifty per cent?" he gasped, through his forced mirth.

"You heard me."

"But why are you satisfied with fifty per cent? Why don't you ask a hundred? You are too modest, Mr. Johnson."

"Very well. As I said just now, I want to be in my office early in the morning, and if you will let your chauffeur take me down to the station, I shall be obliged. If it can't be done, I'll walk."

He had turned toward the door, and was walking toward it, as if there were nothing more to be said.

Nick Carter did not move. He had seen too many of these haggling bargains to believe that Beveridge would let the fencé get to the door.

"Wait a moment, Mr. Johnson," called out Beveridge. "We may be able to adjust this matter if we talk it over."

Johnson stopped in his walk, but did not turn his head toward the other.

"You ask fifty per cent," continued Beveridge. "That is too much. You realize that as well as I do. We'll make it thirty——"

"I said fifty," interrupted Johnson, glancing toward the table on which the ruby still lay.

"Why? What excuse have you for wanting me to give away my friend's property like that?"

Johnson threw himself into the chair he had lately vacated. Then, as he laid his flat hand heavily upon the table, he looked curiously from Asa Beveridge to Marmaduke Powers, and back again.

"I'll tell both of you gentlemen why I want so much, and I'll also say that if I had asked a hundred per cent, it wouldn't have been too much, considering the risk I have to take."

"Well?" observed Powers. "Let her come!"

"This is the reason, then," continued Jeremiah Johnson in a confidential tone in which there was a hint of menace. "There is a representative of the king of Siam in New York at this very time, and he is looking for these stones."

"Rot!" barked Beveridge.

"Very well. If you doubt my word——"

"I don't doubt that you believe what you say," interposed Beveridge quickly. "But I am sure you're mistaken. I should have known if there were anything like that."

"So should I," added Marmaduke Powers.

"Anyhow, that is the truth," insisted Johnson. "I don't suppose there is any one in New York who would handle these stones, even if he were financially able. I have channels of my own for disposing of them, and nobody else can control those channels."

The confidence with which Jeremiah Johnson made these statements was not without its effect upon the two listeners at the table.

As for Nick Carter, it was no news to him, and he only smiled quietly.

He was learning more than he had dared hope for up here above Stonecrag.

"I can't give you fifty per cent," declared Beveridge. "The owner never would stand for that. I might go forty."

There was a long argument, and finally a compromise was made at forty-five per cent of the total value of the stones.

Considering that the gems would be worth in the open market anywhere from four to five million dollars, this was not a bad stroke of business for Jeremiah Johnson.

"When shall I have the stones?" he asked as he waited for the chauffeur to come with the car in response to Asa Beveridge's telephone.

"Wednesday night," replied Beveridge.

"All of them?"

"Yes."

"This is Monday. The night after to-morrow, then?"

"Yes."

"Are you going back to town, Mr. Powers?" asked Johnson as the car was heard outside the house.

"No. I shall stay over here to-night and perhaps to-morrow. I want to help Mr. Shaw get these stones ready for you."

Johnson nodded, without making any comment.

Ten minutes later he was going down the dark, winding road on his way to the railroad station. There would be a train in less than half an hour, and he wanted to make sure that he would not miss it.

While Jeremiah Johnson was departing by the front door, Nick Carter slipped out of that at the rear.

"Well, Chick! It looks to me as if the whole case could be looked after from here," he said as his assistant came out. "And I think I see where Grantley comes into the transaction."

CHAPTER VI.

A LITTLE HOUSEBREAKING.

"You don't think Grantley has the stones that were taken from the mine, and that were afterward stolen from the office of Señor Ribiero in the government building in Bangkok, do you?" asked Chick.

"I do not."

"Then what——"

"My dear Chick," said Nick, with a smile, "you know as well as I that there are several ramifications of this case. You haven't forgotten that a number of jewels were stolen from the Great Pagoda in Bangkok?"

"Cut away from the images and altarpieces," remarked Chick. "Of course I haven't forgotten. That was a mysterious robbery, too. No one could be certain who had done the job."

"Nobody was certain," assented Nick. "But circumstances pointed pretty conclusively to Grantley."

"With no proof."

"Exactly, Chick. With no proof. If there had been any, Grantley would not be in possession of them now."

"You think he has them, then?"

"We shall find out to-night if we are careful," was Nick Carter's answer. "We are going to visit Joy View." "Grantley's house?"

"Yes."

"As guests?"

"As uninvited guests," laughed Nick. "We are going to do a little amateur burglarizing. I think I can square ourselves with the regular police if we are caught. That does not render us immune against bullets, of course. But I don't suppose you will want to be excused on that account."

"I am always ready for a scrap," returned Chick quietly.

Nick knew his assistant spoke the truth, and it was with perfect confidence in him that the famous detective a few hours later stepped briskly along the winding road which led to the mansion at top of the mountain, known as "Joy View."

It was a very dark night, with only stars to light the way. But Nick had been up this road before to visit the former owner of the mansion. That was a long time previously. But the detective had an instinctive sense of direction, and he had no trouble in keeping on to where he wanted to go.

They passed several roads which branched off from their own, but he was never deceived by them.

"Here's a stone wall," whispered Chick at last as he found his further progress barred. "And I can see a house up there on the hill."

"This is Joy View," said Nick. "The wall is to support the terraced ground there. The mansion is built on top of a series of terraces, and the whole thing would go tumbling down the mountain if it were not held up in some way. We'll find a gateway somewhere. Come on!"

They did find a gateway, with a gate that was not locked.

When they were inside, Nick latched the gate behind them.

"Are we going in the back way?" whispered Chick.

"Wait and let us take a look," returned Nick. "We have plenty of time. There is only one light showing. I should judge that that is from the window of the library, from what I recollect of the lay-out of the

place. If Grantley is in there, we shall have to wait till he goes to bed."

"There are three windows to the left of the lighted one," remarked Chick.

"I see them. Most likely they belong to the kitchen and pantry."

"Or the dining room."

"No, Chick. They are not far enough apart to belong to the dining room. Besides, there would not be space enough for that room to be there. There are two windows on the right of the library, but I should not think they belong to the dining room, either."

"There must be a dining room somewhere," suggested Chick.

"Yes, but it is on the other side of the house, I believe."

"And those two dark windows on the right——"

"Must belong to a drawing-room or reception hall. There is one thing sure—everything upstairs is dark and silent. If Grantley keeps servants—and he is just the sort of, self-indulgent gentleman to have a big staff to wait on him—they have all gone to bed."

"How do you mean to get in, chief?"

"By this drawing-room—one of those two dark windows."

"Which one?"

"That farthest from the light. If there is somebody still in the library, the greater space, we put between it and ourselves, the better it will be for us."

"Shall we go in while Grantley is in the library?"

"If it is, he, yes. Whether it is he or somebody else, still yes," was Nick's answer.

"That's the stuff!" observed Chick commendably.

"You see, Chick, if it should turn out to be Grantley, the thing to do is to go right in and play a holdup game. It will save time if we can make him open the safe for us."

"Where the stones are?"

"Where I hope they are," corrected Nick. "We don't know anything certain yet."

They had been standing inside the wall, in the shadow of a clump of trees, inspecting the house.

As soon as Nick had come to a conclusion, he told Chick to come along, without noise, and they began their winding ascent to the house.

By keeping carefully in the shadow of the trees, the two were able to get right up to the gravel drive in front of the main door without any danger of being seen.

No change had been noticed in the aspect of the mansion since they had surveyed it from the roadway. There was still a light in the library, with all the other windows dark.

"We'll have to get up on the porch, I suppose?" whispered Chick.

"Yes. Be careful not to make any noise."

Once on the wide veranda, which was in deep shadow, Nick took from his pocket a small steel instrument not much thicker than a fountain pen, but twice as long.

"If you were pinched, they'd say they found burglars' tools on you all right," whispered Chick, grinning.

"Quiet!" was all the answer he got.

Nick opened the small implement, and showed three spiderlike arms protruding from the main stem.

It was a contrivance for opening window catches, and,

in the hands of a skillful operator, could set at defiance almost any of them.

The detective slipped back that catch. Then he put his instrument back into his pocket and noiselessly raised the sash.

"That was easy," whispered the irrepressible Chick.

Nick gave him a jog with his elbow, as a hint to keep quiet. Then, taking out his electric flash lamp, while he still stood outside, he sent the light all about the room.

A slight smile flickered on his lips as he saw that his conjecture as to its being a drawing-room was correct. It was a handsomely furnished apartment, too.

He stepped over the sill, which was not very high above the porch floor, and let himself down inside.

"Come on, Chick!"

When his assistant was by his side, he closed the window softly, and, holding Chick by the elbow, crept across the thick drugget to where he had noticed a half-open door.

General Brenidge, to whom Joy View had belonged originally, had had a passion for making changes in his residence. The general had an architect as regularly on his staff as if he had been the family physician.

The house was never the same, especially as to the interior, for two years in succession.

The consequence was that when Grantley got into possession it was difficult for a stranger to find his way about at all, even when there was plenty of light. In the darkness it was still more of a puzzle.

Nick used his flash light as he went along, and it did not trouble him much to find his way to the great hall. It was a huge space that would have accommodated a large dinner party, and still have left room enough for a glance around the table and chairs.

There was a narrow hall to the left, and Nick believed it would lead him to the library if he kept on far enough.

In a short time he found that his surmise was correct.

He could see a thin line of light at the bottom of the door. When he had pulled the door a little way toward him—for it opened outward—he found that there were heavy portières inside.

One sharp look between the closed portières told him that the apartment was empty, although a shaded lamp on the table was still alight.

What attracted his attention more than anything, however, was the chair which had been in front of the table, but was now lying on its side, as if it had been overturned in the course of a struggle.

Nick did not take long to arrive at a conclusion.

Taking the still-lighted lamp and the upset chair as a basis, it was not difficult for him to decide that something had happened in this house, and that Asa Beveridge or Marmaduke Powers, or both of them, had probably been concerned in it.

There had been several hours to dispose of between the time that Nick had overheard the controversy between Beveridge and Jeremiah Johnson over the gems and that when the detective had thought it advisable to pay his visit to Joy View.

The interim had been employed by Nick and his assistant in finding a summer hotel that the detective knew was not far away on the mountain, and where the two had a good dinner.

Nick Carter had been obliged to maintain his character

of a horse dealer, with Chick as a hostler. So the head waiter had put them both in a very retired corner of the large dining room, where they would not offend the eyes of other guests of delicate sensibilities.

This had suited them exactly, for it gave the detectives an opportunity to see who was in the big hotel, without his being noticed.

What the result of his observations was he did not confide to his assistant. But Chick had the satisfaction of knowing that if there was any one in that big room who might become a factor in this case, or any other, in future, his chief would have no doubt about the identity of that person.

That there had been visitors to John Grantley who had not behaved themselves politely while in his house was obvious.

"They came while we were at the Stonecrag Hotel. Chick," remarked the detective softly, "The thing is to find out who they were. Try that safe over there."

His assistant obeyed. He tugged at the handle and turned it around. The door remained closed.

"I didn't expect anything else," remarked Nick. "It is evident there has been a fight here. You can see that from the position of this chair. If it had only fallen over through the person in it getting up suddenly, it would be lying close to the table."

"Instead of that, it is halfway across the room," put in Chick. "It must have been kicked away from the table."

"That rug is turned up at the corner," went on Nick. "And there is a pencil and a book on the floor."

"Must have been a lively scrap," commented Chick. "Wonder what it was all about. Do you think Grantley has gone to bed?"

"If he has, he would not have left his light on. Besides, after a row, such as there must have been here, he would have straightened up things a little—provided the other fellow had gone away before he knocked Grantley out."

"He wasn't knocked out," was Chick's opinion, "else he'd be in this room now."

"I suppose he has gone to bed," said Nick reflectively. "Well, we have come here for a certain purpose, and we shall have to get to work. After all, I don't care whether I see Mr. Grantley to-night or not."

Nick stepped over to the safe and knelt in front of it. Hardly had he done so, when a quavering voice from the half-open door gave the command:

"Hands up!"

CHAPTER VII.

THE LOST IS FOUND.

Nick Carter looked toward the doorway, and jumped to his feet. At the same instant his hand went to the pocket where lay an automatic revolver.

The person who had ordered his hands to go up was a pale-faced individual, in the black clothes, white shirt-front, and black tie of a butler. In his trembling hands he held a double-barreled gun.

The butler wanted to be brave, but the effort was evidently a trying one, for he could not keep the gun level, notwithstanding his valiant intentions.

"Keep where you are!" he went on. "This gun is loaded in both barrels, and I'll shoot you if you don't get out."

Chick grinned. He had noted the incongruity of the butler's ordering them first not to move, and then telling them to get out.

Of course, the gun might go off, but Chick was not afraid the butler would hit any one he aimed at even if it did.

It was Nick Carter who broke the spell.

"Drop that gun!" he ordered sharply.

The butler was so startled by the sudden command that he jumped back and let the gun fall with a terrific clatter on the polished floor at the edge of the thick rug.

"Before you can make a gun go off, my friend, it is necessary to see that it is cocked," went on Nick calmly. "Come farther into this room. I want to look at you."

Although the detective was dressed as a horse dealer and had nothing in his appearance to impress a man of this butler's type, the latter felt instinctively that there was a ring in the sharp voice which meant that its owner would be obeyed.

"What's your name?" asked Nick.

"Drumm, sir."

"Drumm, eh? Well, Drumm, what are you doing here at this time of night?"

"I'm the butler, sir," returned Drumm, his voice shaking. "I'm expected to see that everything is all right about the house."

"Well, stand in the middle of the room so that I can see what you look like."

Drumm obeyed, and the detective, after cying him over, remarked to Chick, with a scrutinizing frown at the butler:

"I don't much like the looks of this man, do you?"

"He has a hard face," remarked Chick, trying not to grin and wondering what all this would lead to.

"Who is your employer?" demanded Nick, suddenly swinging around again to Drumm.

"Mr. Ralph Stanton, sir."

"Where is he?"

"I don't know, sir."

The look of bewilderment on Drumm's face indicated that he really did not know.

"Did you hear any noise in this room that induced you to come?" was Nick Carter's next query. "Anything like a scuffle or furniture falling about?"

"Yes. I heard something. I was in bed, and it woke me up. My bedroom is not far away. It is between this library and Mr. Stanton's bedroom, in fact. That is so I shall be within call in case he wants me at any time, either in the library or at night."

"What did you find when you came down here?"

Drumm hesitated. Finally he blurted out, in an apologetic tone:

"I found you and this other man in the library. That's all. I thought you must be burglars when I peeped in between the curtains. So I went to a closet and got this gun. I didn't know whether it was loaded or not. But I thought it would be a good thing to have."

"I don't agree with you there," returned Nick Carter dryly. "It is not well to flourish a gun unless you are in a position to use it. The other fellow might have a gun and shoot first."

"I'll remember that another time," answered Drumm humbly.

"I would. Mr. Stanton is not in bed, is he?"

"No, sir. His bedroom door is open, and I peeped in as I came along. The bed has not been touched."

"Well, now, Drumm, I want to ask you a few questions."

"Yes, sir."

"If you don't answer them truthfully, and keep quiet afterward, I warn you that you will find yourself in trouble with the law."

"Are you a detective?" suddenly asked Drumm as a new light burst upon him.

"Never mind whether I am or not. You will find that out soon enough if you are not honest in this matter. What time did you go to bed?"

"At ten o'clock."

"And the other people in the house—the maids?"

"They went a little before I did."

"Mr. Stanton was in this room when you went to your room?"

"Yes."

"What was he doing?"

"Sitting at his table, looking over some papers."

"And when you came in the next time it was just now?"

"Yes."

"You have no idea where Mr. Stanton is?"

"None, sir."

"Do you know if he kept anything of value in that safe?"

"I'm sure he did. He had it put in when he took the house. It is a new one, you see. If you look behind it, you will find that it is chained to the wall."

"I know that. I guess that's all I want to ask now. Chick, take this man and search the whole house for Mr. Stanton. Mind you don't wake up the maids. We don't want a panic. I'll stay here till you get back."

As soon as Drumm and Chick had left the room, Nick closed the door and turned the key. Then he knelt down in front of the safe and closely examined the combination lock.

For once, however, the shrewd detective had found a lock that defied him.

The safe was new, as Drumm had said. That meant that the lock was of the latest improved pattern, so that it could not be opened by anybody not having the combination.

"It will have to be left for the present," murmured Nick. "I'd like to see what is in there. As the next best thing, I'll try and find Mr. Grantley and make him show me. If I can do that I shall have a big half of this case cleaned up at one swoop."

The detective had little doubt that in that safe were the jewels stolen from the Great Pagoda in Bangkok, the temple known as Wat Chang, and which had been on his mind ever since he had heard of their loss.

He knew that Grantley had been there, and he had had proof that the rascal knew something about the theft.

If the jewels were in this safe, it would be the first time the detective had been close to them. It made him feel almost as if the big loot from the mines was of minor importance.

Before getting up from his knees, the detective glanced casually under the safe. The next moment he had reached underneath and brought forth something over which his fingers closed with convulsive satisfaction.

"This is the twin of that one I saw in the hand of Beveridge," he muttered. "Whether I get the clamps on Beveridge and Marmaduke Powers or not, at all events I've got proof against Grantley that he won't be able to shake off in a hurry."

Nick was examining, under the light on the table, a magnificent ruby, highly polished, and bearing on one side some fragments of a certain cement, which showed that it had been attached to one of the images in a Siamese pagoda.

The stone was irregular in shape, just as it had come from the mine, as many of the stones are that are used in sacred temples in Asia. But the polish it bore saved it from any suggestion of being unfinished.

The detective placed it carefully in his pocket. But even then he could not help thinking it over.

"It isn't like all the stones Potter showed me," he mused. "That is a peculiar thing. Potter said he got his stones from a man who gave his name as Ralph Stanton, but whose description is rather that of Asa Beveridge. Then, to counterbalance that, here is a ruby under Grantley's safe that most assuredly came from the Great Pagoda in Bangkok. This is a twisted mystery, and no mistake."

When Chick and Drumm got back to the library, they found Nick Carter sitting at the table, facing the door, and in a brown study.

The chair that had been overturned still lay on the floor, and neither the pencil nor book which had been knocked off the table—presumably during the struggle, signs of which were on all sides—had been touched.

Nick Carter wanted to leave the room just as it had been found by him and his assistant. So he resolved to have it locked and kept locked for the present, after he had gone.

"Well?" he questioned, as his assistant came in.

"Nothing doing," was Chick's reply.

"Couldn't find him, eh?"

"Doesn't seem to be in the house. My friend here, Mr. Drumm, tells me we have been in every part of the house except the rooms of the maidservants, and there is nothing to be seen of Mr. Stanton."

"It isn't likely he would be about the house except in his own apartments, sir," interposed Drumm. "Mr. Stanton is a very methodical gentleman. He keeps to his own rooms always. I don't think he ever saw the inside of the kitchen even, and he has been in the drawing-room only once that I remember."

"Ah, it is what I expected," answered Nick Carter coolly. "I don't think he will be home to-night. Drumm, you have a motor car here? Or Mr Stanton has?"

"Yes, sir."

"Where is the garage?"

"At the back of the house, sir. The chauffeur sleeps upstairs in the garage. Do you want him?"

"Telephone him to bring the car to the front of the house and leave it there. We will take it down to the station, and the chauffeur can go for it in the morning."

"Ye-yes, sir," stammered Drumm. "But what will Mr. Stanton say about it? Will it be all right, do you think?"

"Do as I tell you. Here is the phone. Send the mes-

sage right from here. When the chauffeur has brought the machine around, he can go back to bed. I believe Mr. Stanton often drives the car himself."

"Very often."

"I know he does," rejoined Nick. "Now hurry!"

Drumm sent the message as he had been ordered, and then Nick Carter addressed him again:

"I want to warn you again to say nothing about Mr. Stanton's absence, or about our having come here. It is none of your business who I am. But I will tell you that I represent the law, and you know, I dare say, that it is not safe to fool with the law."

"I know that, sir," responded Drumm meekly.

"Very well, then. You will keep quiet about all that has happened here to-night. If any one ask you where Mr. Stanton is you will say that he is at home, you believe. If you are very hard pressed, by people who know he is not in the house, then you don't know where he is. Get that?"

"Yes, sir."

"You will not only keep quiet yourself, but you will see that every one about the house is silent also."

"Of course," answered Drumm.

"That's all for the present. Is that the car I hear outside?"

"I'll go and see," was Drumm's eager response as he made for the door.

At a sign from his chief, Chick went to the front door with Drumm.

A powerful touring car belonging to Grantley had drawn up, and the chauffeur was looking inquiringly at the door.

"You can go back, Williams," called out Drumm. "Mr. Stanton will drive to the station himself. You can take the car home in the morning. Good night."

The alacrity with which Williams said "Good night!" and retreated down the drive in the direction of the garage suggested that he was not displeased to escape further duty just then.

When Williams had disappeared, Chick went back to the library with Drumm.

"Lock this door, Drumm!" directed Nick.

The butler obeyed and tendered the key to the detective. But Nick shook his head.

"I don't want the key," he said. "I am not in charge of this house. But I want you to keep that library door locked until Mr. Stanton returns or you get further orders from me."

"Very good, sir," answered Drumm. "I'll do exactly as you say, sir."

"Then good night, Drumm."

"Good night, sir. And a pleasant trip to—to—wherever you are going."

"We are going to New York as soon as we can get a train," said Nick. "There is no secret about that."

He took his seat behind the wheel in the car, and as Chick sat by his side, he pressed the electric starting button and got the machine under way.

"I should like to know his name," muttered Drumm as he watched the red tail light of the car winding down the drive until it was suddenly extinguished as it got out of his sight through the gateway in the stone wall.

CHAPTER VIII.

A MIX-UP OF NAMES.

When Nick Carter drove the car alongside the station, under a shed that had been built there especially to shelter the vehicles of those who lived on the mountainside and were in the habit of commuting by railroad from New York, he jumped out quickly, shut off the engine, and slipped around to the front of the station by a rear way.

When he got to the platform, and was walking carelessly along in the darkness, he found Chick by his side.

"Well, Chick! What did he do?"

"He's examining the car, as if he wonders who brought it down, and why. He thinks Williams must be somewhere about. I mean his chauffeur, you know."

Nick Carter nodded, while a grim smile slightly curled his stern lips.

"Keep out of sight till the train pulls in. Then hop aboard on the first car you come to. I'll do the same on another. The aim is to keep out of Grantley's sight till we get to New York. Even then we'll still hide ourselves from him, while noticing what he does."

"I get you, chief," replied Chick. "Better get to the dark end of the platform, right away from the station building. He's coming out."

Nick and his assistant were so far away from the part of the platform where passengers usually gathered that it would be impossible for any one to make them out in the darkness without coming very close.

They noticed John Grantley moving about near the waiting room. He was going in and out, and it was easy to see that he was worried. He could not account for his car being there.

"Do you suppose he is going to New York?" asked Chick.

"If he didn't, it would upset all my calculations," replied Nick. "And I shall be surprised if I don't find out where he is going when he gets there."

The train for New York came booming along, and there was not much time to get aboard. It made a very short stop at Stonecrag, which was merely a flag station. If there had not been a number of wealthy and influential people living there, it would probably not have stopped at all.

In less than a minute after the train had come to rest at the long platform, it was again in motion.

It had picked up three passengers. They were John Grantley, alias Ralph Stanton; Nick Carter, and his assistant, Chickering Carter.

Grantley had not yet settled in his mind who had brought his car down to the station. The truth never occurred to him. He finally decided that Williams, his chauffeur, was out for a joy ride with some friends, and had left the car temporarily at the station, not supposing his employer was anywhere but in his bed in the mansion on top of the mountain miles away.

"I'll haul him over the coals for that when I get back," growled Grantley. "I'd discharge him if he were not such a good driver—and if he were not a man I can trust to do anything I want without talking about it afterward."

The train ran to New York on schedule time and without untoward incident.

"See where he goes," was Nick's instruction to Chick when they got off the train and saw their man marching

along the platform in the front of the procession of passengers. "He'll probably take a taxi and go to a hotel."

By the time that Nick Carter had proceeded in leisurely fashion down the platform and reached the waiting room in the great terminal, Chick came up, telling him that Grantley had gone in a taxi to the Hotel Supremacy.

"Very well, Chick. Hustle down there in another taxi and find out that he really is there. Also, get the number of his room, if you can. They know you at the Supremacy, and if you crowd in at the desk when his room is given to him no one will bother you."

Giving these instructions rapidly, Nick saw his assistant depart for the Supremacy. Then he turned his own steps toward his home in Madison Avenue.

Once in his own library, Nick Carter reviewed the case so far as it had gone.

He had taken off his disguise and put on his own clothes. Also, he had enjoyed a good sluice in the bathroom, and he felt that his ideas were all the clearer for the process.

"As it appears to me," he declaimed in a low tone to the surrounding space, "I hit it correctly when I supposed Marmaduke Powers and Asa Beveridge were trying to dispose of those stones from the mines for the Loop gang. Now it seems that Powers and Beveridge are after the other gems taken from the Great Pagoda by Grantley."

He walked up and down the room several times as he arranged in his mind the facts he had learned, as well as his suspicions.

"Somebody—perhaps Marmaduke Powers and Beveridge, or possibly only Powers alone—went to Grantley to-night, scared him at a pistol's point, and tried to get into that safe. They were interrupted, I should think. Most likely it was Drumm that they heard coming, or it may have been Chick and me in the house. So they knocked Grantley over and got out."

He smoked for some minutes as he turned this over and over to see where there might be any flaws in his theory. He could not see any.

So long had Nick Carter been in the habit of building up a case in just this way, piecing facts and suspicions together until they formed a solid whole, that he believed he could not be mistaken in his calculations now.

"Let me see," he continued, half aloud. "Powers and Beveridge are going to see Jeremiah Johnson to-morrow night with the big lot of stones from the mines. At least, that is their arrangement. They didn't say what time, by the way. Well, that is of no consequence. Johnson lives in his place of business, and any time in the course of the night will do for him."

He leaned back in his chair and smoked comfortably as he thought of the case; and the more he thought, the more sure he felt that he would get to the bottom of it before long.

He was satisfied that it was not because they forgot it that the conspirators had not named any particular time for the meeting in the home of the fence in New York.

Rather was it caution. Although they did not suspect that anybody was listening to their conversation, they would not take chances. It was habitual with them to keep back some of their plans till the last moment. Then there could be no "listening in."

"But I will be there, nevertheless," muttered the detec-

tive as he put the end of his cigar in the ash tray. "Any time will be convenient to me."

Soon Chick came into the library, and Nick knew at once, from the expression on his face, that he had been successful in his mission.

"He is in No. 922, and he registered as Ralph Stanton," reported Chick. "Looked about him as if worried. Seemed to be satisfied that nobody was shadowing him, however, and I saw him safely up in the elevator. He did not come down for ten minutes, at least. I waited there for that length of time."

"That will do, Chick. Get to bed. We may have a busy day to-morrow. Possibly we may be compelled to stay up late at night—or not go to bed at all."

"Any old thing suits me," laughed Chick as he left the room. "Good night."

For another hour Nick Carter sat alone in the library, turning everything over in his mind. Then he went to bed, with his program for the next day well arranged.

It was very late when Nick and his assistant retired. But the famous detective believed in getting as much sleep as he required when it was possible to do so. So he and Chick did not come down to breakfast till eight o'clock.

"Call up the Supremacy and ask if Mr. Stanton is there," directed Nick as, at nine-fifteen, they got up from the breakfast table. "I'll look over my mail in the meantime. Tell the clerk it is Mr. Carter, and that he need not call Mr. Stanton's room."

Chick nodded understandingly, and went to the telephone, while his employer rapidly cut open his morning letters, and disposed of them in the businesslike manner in which he did everything.

"He's gone out," suddenly announced Chick, who had been telephoning in an adjoining room.

"He has?" cried Nick, getting up. "How long?"

"About half an hour ago."

"Call Maloney, quick! Tell him to rush the car around here!"

A peremptory order like this left no time for discussion. Chick obeyed on the instant.

Nick was in his ordinary dress—that of a successful business man—and no one would have remarked him particularly if he had joined the rush-hour throng which goes downtown, in the subway, on the L, or by the surface cars, at that hour.

It was not to avoid meeting people in the public conveyances that he resolved to use his own car, but because he was in a hurry. He desired to get to his destination, wherever it might be, in as short a time as possible.

"Stay here till I come back, Chick."

He gave these instructions without turning his head as he left the library.

Danny Maloney had had time to get around with the big motor car, and Nick did not take the trouble to look out of the window to see that it was there. He knew it would be.

"Maiden Lane, Danny!" he said briefly as he stepped in. "And, hustle!"

Maloney was a man who spoke little. This time he did not speak at all. He merely nodded, opened up the engine, and went downtown as fast as he could without getting in trouble with the police.

"Mr. Potter?" asked the detective as he went into the

outer office of Samuel Potter's diamond establishment. "Is he busy?"

"Yes, Mr. Carter," returned the clerk respectfully. "He has somebody with him just now. But he won't be more than a few minutes if I give him the signal."

As he spoke, the clerk touched a button under the counter. It connected with a soft buzzer in Mr. Potter's room, and told him that there was another caller waiting who was regarded as important.

This signal is one used in a great many establishments in large cities. It enables managers and proprietors to know that they are wanted outside, so that they can shut off the person who happens to be with them as soon as his real business is finished.

"Who is the person with Mr. Potter?" asked Nick. "Stout man, well dressed?"

"Yes, Mr. Carter. That fits him."

The detective nodded and took a seat to wait. He felt sure it was Grantley in the private room of the gem merchant, and no doubt his business was to dispose of some of the Great Pagoda jewels.

Of course Grantley would recognize him as he passed through the outer office, unless he kept in the background.

So Nick had seated himself behind a screen placed on purpose to enable visitors to keep out of sight of others who might come.

A great deal of Samuel Potter's business was of a strictly private nature. If everybody who visited him had been seen by everybody else, it would have caused all sorts of trouble. Indeed, there might have been an upheaval, the full results of which could not be anticipated.

For example, Mr. Potter was in the habit of lending money on jewelry and other valuables, but only to a select circle of clients. That was one of his business secrets.

In about five minutes the door of Mr. Potter's office was flung open. Out came a large man, with a deep voice, who kept on talking till he was outside.

He was merely saying good-by to the diamond merchant, but he took a great many words to say it.

Nick Carter uttered an inaudible ejaculation of disappointment. This large person was not John Grantley—alias Ralph Stanton. He was a man whom the detective did not know.

"Come in, Nick!" called out Potter genially as he came to the door and held out his hand. "I'm glad to see you."

They shook hands, and Samuel Potter carefully closed the door.

"Any news?" asked Nick.

"I don't know whether you'll consider it news," returned Potter in his usual soft, cautious tones. "But there has been a man here trying to sell me some rubies that are just like those I showed you recently."

"The same man that came before?"

"No. This man was stout, red-faced, and showily dressed. The other one wore good enough clothes, but they were very quiet, and he was thin and lantern-jawed."

"Gave him name as Ralph Stanton, didn't he?"

"Yes."

"What is the name of this stout, showy man?"

"Asa Beveridge," replied Potter.

CHAPTER IX.

MOBILIZATION PLANS.

It was an unusual thing for Nick Carter to show great surprise, at anything. But when he heard that a man answering the description of Ralph Stanton had come to Potter and given the name of Beveridge, while Beveridge previously, for some reasons of his own, had assumed the name of Stanton, it was a game of cross purposes that the detective could not understand.

"When did this Mr.—er—Beveridge come?" he asked.

"This morning. He has been gone only about twenty minutes. He was here before I arrived, at half past eight."

"Did he sell you any stones?"

"No. I told him I would have to consider the matter, and would let him know."

"Where?"

"At the Hotel Supremacy. And this is where it seems crooked to me, Carter. I call up the Supremacy, and they told me they had no guest of the name of Beveridge staying there."

Nick Carter might have suggested that if Potter had asked for a Mr. Ralph Stanton, probably he would have had better success. But he didn't do it. He decided that he would keep to himself what he knew.

"Did this Beveridge show you any of the rubies he had?"

"Two. Both were very large, and both had the distinctive features of the stones I have in my safe, and that I showed you the last time you were here. The difference is that, while the others were not polished and appeared a great deal as they must have looked when they were mined, the two shown me this morning were highly polished, although not symmetrically cut."

"Did he take them away with him?"

"Yes. But I had a good look at them. I shall know them again if ever I see them. You know, of course, that precious stones each have a distinctive aspect that one can distinguish at once if he is in the habit of dealing in gems?"

Nick Carter nodded. He did know this, as he knew most things that might be noticed by an observing man.

"When do you mean to let him know?"

"That depends on you. I was going to call you up this morning. But your coming makes that unnecessary. What do you think of it all? Do you know this Asa Beveridge?"

"I think I do. If you will hold this matter back for a day or two, probably I shall be able to tell you something more about these two rubies you saw this morning, as well as the other stones you got the other day."

"I'll do anything you say, Nick," returned Samuel Potter. "I am not particular about taking up this deal. There is too much suspicion about it to suit me."

"You have paid something on the other stones, haven't you?" asked Nick, although he knew perfectly well what the answer must be.

"Yes; but nothing like their real value. I paid ten thousand, as I told you before. I could afford to do that for stones that will bring from a quarter of a million to three hundred and fifty thousand dollars."

"I hope you won't lose your ten thousand, Mr. Potter," remarked Nick dryly.

"I don't think I shall," was the response. "My pur-

chase of them was entirely legitimate. You can bet I'll take care I don't lose what I've paid. But, of course, your assistance in the matter would help materially."

There was a note of anxiety in Samuel Potter's voice, in spite of his pretending to be so confident, and Nick hastened to reassure him.

"Whatever happens, Mr. Potter," he returned, "I'll see that you are protected. But take my advice and don't let those stones get away from you until we have talked it over together again."

"You can depend on that," answered Potter, as Nick waved a good-by and went out of the building.

Danny Maloney was sitting in the big car, waiting, with his usual equanimity. He had been yelled at and sworn at by several short-tempered gentlemen driving heavy teams, and at last a policeman had warned him that if he stayed there another five minutes, blocking up the narrow street, he would be pulled in.

The policeman was the only person Danny condescended to answer. To him he whispered a few words. The policeman's demeanor changed instantly. He was almost humble.

"Why didn't you tell me before whose car it is?" he demanded. "Stay as long as you like, of course." Then, turning to a very loud-mouthed driver of a big truck, he shouted: "G'wan! That'll be all for yours! Pull over to the other side! What do you think you're doing? Regulating all the traffic in New York? G'wan, now! Get a move on you!"

The truck driver was wise in his generation. Moreover, he knew New York police politics like a book. He drove on without a word.

Nick Carter came out at this juncture. He smilingly returned the policeman's greeting: "Good morning, Mr. Carter! Fine morning!" and ordered Maloney to get up to the Hotel Supremacy as quickly as he could.

Without hesitation, the detective, when he reached, went to the desk of the hotel and asked if Mr. Ralph Stanton was in his rooms.

"Mr. Stanton?" returned the clerk. "He went away fifteen minutes ago."

"Did he have much baggage?" asked Nick.

The clerk who had given him the other information happened not to know him. He looked at the detective rather suspiciously, and was evidently about to refuse to tell anything about the baggage, when another clerk, who did know Nick Carter, interposed.

"He hadn't any baggage at all, Mr. Carter. But he paid for his room last night in advance. Not that he need have done so. We judge our guests a great deal by their appearance. He only came last night. I understand he has a fine country home somewhere up the Hudson."

"Yes, he has," answered Nick. "I'll catch him there."

The detective was not much disappointed. In fact, he would have been rather surprised if he had found Ralph Stanton at the Supremacy now. It was apparent that Stanton had run down to New York in the hope of disposing of the gems stolen from the Great Pagoda, and that to Mr. Potter he had taken the name of his former partner in Siam, so that if there had been questions he could have explained his identity with some plausibility.

"I'm glad you came back so soon, chief," was the way Chick received him, as he entered his library fifteen minutes afterward. "Telephone from Señor Ribiero."

"Well?"

"He said he was sure he had seen Ralph Stanton at the Hotel Supremacy. Couldn't be quite certain, because this man was dressed altogether differently from the Stanton he had seen in Bangkok."

"Yes?"

"Ribiero said he had inquired at the office desk, and been told that there was no Mr. Ralph Stanton there at that time."

"Of course not! He had just gone away. Then what?"

"That was all. Ribiero wishes you would call him up and tell him whether you know anything about Stanton."

"H'm!" remarked Nick. "If I had thought of Señor Ribiero, I could have spoken to him at the hotel. I have just come from there. But I have nothing to say that I know of. It would not help us in this case to have him interfering."

"Going to call him up?"

"You telephone him, Chick. Tell him there is nothing new. He will hear from me when I have anything to communicate." Say I hope that will be soon."

A ring on the telephone called for Nick Carter's attention before the message could be sent to Señor Ribiero. It was from police headquarters. Lieutenant Ironstone desired to speak to Mr. Carter.

"Hello, lieutenant!"

"Hello, Nick! I hear there is something doing in that four-million case."

"Yes? What have you found out?"

"I hear that some of the stuff may be planted in New York to-night."

"Where?"

"I don't know exactly. But maybe I can guess. Could you come down here for a few minutes?"

"Be with you in a quarter of an hour," replied Nick. "Good-by."

As he hung up the receiver, the detective told Chick to get Ribiero on the wire and send the message already given. Then he hustled out, caught a taxi as he turned into Fifth Avenue, and sped down to headquarters.

"What do you know, lieutenant?" asked Nick, as he was admitted to Ironstone's private office.

"There will be a big bunch of stones turned over to-night. I got that straight," answered Lieutenant Ironstone. "I know of only three places where a deal as big as that would be likely to be pulled off."

Nick Carter nodded.

"There is Frau Meyers, the professor——"

"It would not be either of those," interrupted Nick decidedly. "The frau is in San Francisco, and the professor is not doing anything these days, you know."

"That's right," assented the lieutenant. "The professor knows we have an eye on him. I didn't know Frau Meyers was away. Well, that leaves only Jerry Johnson. He's a slippery customer."

"All the more reason to try and nail him," smiled Nick. "He's beaten the police so many times that it would be a good thing to teach him that he is not too smart to be caught."

"We'll have to handle the case carefully if we are going to get him," remarked Lieutenant Ironstone. "What do you propose?"

"Can you give me three good men—in plain clothes?"

"Of course."

"All right. Have them in Chatham Square at ten

o'clock. I don't know when I can use them. But let them be there. Who will you give me?"

"Fenton, Starke, and Polani. Will they do? You know them all."

"They are good men," answered Nick. "Dress them roughly, so that they can loaf around the square and on the Bowery without being remarked."

"Very well. They are to wait till you give them the word, eh?"

"Yes. I'll speak to them when I come down there. I'll look like a horse dealer from the West. My assistant, Chick, will be a hostler. Understand?"

"Good!" smiled Lieutenant Ironstone. "Ten o'clock!"

As Nick rode home in his taxicab, he leaned back with a smile of satisfaction on his keen face.

"If I can get Johnson at the same time, it will make the case all the more interesting," he muttered.

CHAPTER X.

A PAWN-SHOP ARGUMENT.

It was a misty, unpleasant night. A drizzling rain had been falling since the middle of the afternoon, and there were unwholesome drippings from the elevated railway to the sidewalk in Chatham Square that made the average pedestrian turn up his coat collar and pass on swiftly, without paying much attention to his surroundings.

Those who did look around with a sharp eye might have seen several men hanging about, as if they did not mind the rain or the pneumatic atmosphere.

There were three of them at different parts of the square, and their general appearance suggested down-and-outers who had not the price of a bed in one of the lodging houses so numerous in that neighborhood.

Two other men, who looked as if they were from the country, came strolling up Park Row. One of them, a horse dealer apparently, spoke a word to each of the three tramps and passed on without waiting for a reply.

He said the same thing to each of the trio: "Half past ten, corner Mott."

The horse dealer's companion, who looked like a hostler, and whose cap, pulled low over his brows, partly hid his face, hooked the collar of his sweater a little higher on his chin and whispered:

"Say, chief! Don't you think we'd better be getting in?"

"That's what we are going to do, Chick," was the reply. "I'll go first. When I have been there ten minutes, come in too."

"I'm to pawn this gold watch, eh?"

"Yes. When I have got through with my business about the ring," replied Nick. "I'll keep him testing as long as I can. Mind you don't let him get through with you too soon."

"Trust me," said Chick, with a grin.

"The gang ought to be coming in less than fifteen minutes. That will make it just about right."

"Better to have waited a little longer, wouldn't it? Suppose they don't come on schedule, where shall we be?"

"They will come," returned Nick confidently. "We saw them a few blocks away, and, allowing for their moving slowly, to make sure they are not seen, they will be here in less than a quarter of an hour. If we came afterward, we should not have any chance—or not so good a one, at least."

"I guess you're right," observed Chick.

"I know I am."

Nick went over to a dingy pawnbroker's on the other side of the square, and stood gazing thoughtfully at the display in the window.

Cheap watches, cheaper rings, some mandolins and a violin, several revolvers—exposed boldly for sale, notwithstanding the Sullivan law, which forbids unauthorized persons to carry deadly weapons in New York—and a heterogeneous collection of eyeglasses, mouth organs, umbrellas, and old pictures, were exhibited, together with silver spoons and forks and castors, all needing a good cleaning.

It was the sort of window at which an idler could spend an hour in contemplation, even if he had no money to purchase any of the wonders displayed.

Nothing could be more natural than for a man who looked as, if he were from another part of the country to stand gazing into the window in a sort of brown study. So Nick put in nearly ten minutes looking at the window before he entered the dark store.

As he went in, the door clanged behind him, after proclaiming, through a noisy bell, that it had been opened.

From some mysterious hole in the rear of the crowded place, a man darted out and stood behind the counter.

If Nick Carter had not seen Jeremiah Johnson attired and looking like a prosperous business man, who was particular about his personal appearance, and who never went out unless groomed to the extreme, he might not have recognized the dirty, snuffy, unkempt creature who blinked at him in the light of a smoky oil lamp that cast more shadows than light.

Johnson had a threadbare black frock coat, a dirty collar, and a black necktie very much awry. He seemed as if he had not been shaved for twenty-four hours, at least, and his hands and nails were unspeakable.

"Well," he squeaked, and his voice was altogether different from the full-toned speech that Nick had heard in Stonerag the night before, "is there anything I can do for you?"

"I'd like to speak to you privately," answered Nick.

"Privately? What for? What is your name?"

"Mess," replied Nick, giving the first name that occurred to him. "I wanted to talk to you on business. You have a private room, haven't you?"

"Suppose I have," returned Johnson, "I don't take strangers there unless I know what they have come for."

"Oh, I'll tell you what I came for," answered Nick, with an air of perfect candor, "I'm from Colorado, and I've gone broke in New York."

"Lots of people do that," remarked Jeremiah Johnson, with a grin. "You don't need a private room to tell it in."

"I've got to have money to get home on. Here is a diamond ring that's worth five hundred dollars. I want to raise a hundred dollars on it."

"What?" screamed Johnson, turning away. "A hundred dollars? What do you take me for? You'd better take your ring to some place on Broadway. You don't suppose I have a hundred dollars to spare—in cash, do you?"

"Look at the ring. Then talk about the money," returned Nick. "I could get two hundred and fifty on it, I dare say, if I went around. But I am in this part of the city, and I want a hundred dollars now."

He held up the ring, and the flash of the diamond attracted Johnson. The detective had figured on this.

"Let me see it," growled Johnson.

Nick handed him the ring, and was at once convinced that he could remain in the store for fifteen minutes if it should be desirable.

The ring was worth a thousand dollars, and Johnson recognized the fact at once. Nick knew he would. He depended on that for a prolongation of the interview.

After turning the ring over in his fingers for a few minutes, Johnson got out a powerful magnifying glass and inspected every line of the diamond, looking for possible flaws.

Nick Carter knew there were no flaws, and though Jeremiah Johnson, without looking up, grumbled that the stone was very far from perfect, the detective was quite aware that this was said merely from habit.

"I don't think I care to let it go for a hundred dollars," remarked Nick suddenly. "I want a hundred and fifty. I don't think I can get home on less."

"I'll give you sixty dollars," was Jeremiah Johnson's response to this.

"A hundred and fifty—no less."

"That's out of the question."

"Then I shall have to go somewhere else."

Johnson did not reply. He was gazing at the diamond as if fascinated.

Suddenly the bell on the door rang sharply, and Johnson, as if without thinking what he was doing, slipped the ring in his pocket.

"Wait a minute," protested Nick. "You haven't got that ring yet. It's mine, unless you want to lend a hundred and fifty."

Johnson handed the ring back to the detective, keeping his eye on the outer door.

The person who came in wore a sweater and a cap pulled over his eyes. He had a gold watch he wanted to pawn.

The newcomer hardly noticed Nick, except to crowd past him to the counter.

"Here, young fellow! Hold on!" snapped Nick.

"What's the matter with you?" growled Chick. "Do you pay the rent here? Here's a clock I want to soak for forty," he added, to Johnson.

"Where did you get it?" demanded Johnson.

"Oh, come off! What's that got to do with it? Give me my forty and forget the rest."

Chick could assume a tough air as well as any one. His manner now was that of a pickpocket of the cheaper class, who would take what he wanted by violence if there were no other way to get it.

Johnson reached for the watch and snapped it open with the fingers of an expert. Then he put a watchmaker's glass in his eye, which gave Chick an opportunity to wink unseen at his chief.

Nick Carter moved toward the door. Johnson saw the movement and called out to him to stop.

"Don't go. I'll take another look at that ring when I've settled about this watch."

Nick stopped and sauntered over to the counter, as if he did not care what was done now about the ring. He knew he had Johnson where he wanted him.

The pawnbroker offered Chick twenty dollars on his watch, and when the latter snatched it away from him,

Johnson began to threaten him with the police and penitentiary.

Chick retorted hotly, and soon there was a first-class row in progress, with Nick Carter looking on with much enjoyment. He admired the lifelike acting of his assistant, still he wished the gang they had come to get would make their appearance.

Suddenly, in the midst of the loud argument between Johnson and Chick, Nick caught a faint buzzing under the counter.

"Just a moment, while I look behind my desk here," said Johnson. "I have a list of lost watches. If this one isn't down, either by description or number, I may be willing to give you thirty-five dollars."

Jeremiah Johnson slipped behind the heavy oaken screen which partly hid an old-fashioned high desk.

For perhaps half a minute Nick and Chick stood quite still.

"Now, Chick! Move quickly!" whispered Nick.

As he said this, the detective vaulted over the counter and ran behind the oaken screen. No one was there!

Chick was close on the heels of his chief, and when Nick pointed to an open trapdoor in the floor, with a steep ladder, he needed no second instruction.

Nick did not trouble to use the ladder. He let himself into the black hole and swung himself by his fingers from the floor. When he dropped he found he only had to go down about two feet.

He was in a spacious cellar, in pitch darkness except for a distant light that flickered as if showing through the crack of a door.

"What is it, chief?" whispered Chick's voice into his ear.

"Follow, and have your gun ready!" returned Nick.

"I've got it where I can get it," was the reply.

They had just reached a half-open door, where the light of a dim lamp shone through, when they saw Jeremiah unbolt and unlock another door some distance ahead, on the other side of a comfortably furnished apartment which looked like a private office.

As the pawnbroker cautiously pulled the door open, six men came in hurriedly, and without any noise save that caused by the shuffling of their twelve feet on the bare floor.

Nick Carter had a good view of the whole six. He recognized them all on the instant.

They were Marmaduke Powers, Asa Beveridge, and the four members of the Loop Gang—Joe Greene, Hank Vaughan, Phil Levey, and Dave Callahan!

CHAPTER XI.

NICK MAKES A PROMISE.

"Wait a moment!" said Jeremiah Johnson. "I'll be back directly."

He hurried along the cellar and up the steps to the shop above.

This was Nick Carter's opportunity.

"Come, Chick!"

Nick stole softly to the doorway leading to the office-like room in which the six rascals were gathered. He was holding in his hand a pair of shoes that he had picked up from a heap of them—all fastened together in couples, just as they had been pawned. Taking careful aim at

the oil lamp on a table in the middle of the room, he let go!

Smash!

The shoes hit the lamp squarely. It fell upon the floor and exploded. Fortunately it went out at once. The detective had taken careful note of the room, so that he could cross it in the darkness. Hardly had the lamp gone out, when he ran straight to the door opposite. It had been locked and bolted again after the admission of the six men.

This was only a temporary obstacle.

With skillful fingers, the detective unfastened the bolts and locks, without making any sound.

"Go and get the three plain-clothes men, Chick!" he whispered. "Bring them quickly. They are on the corner."

"But what will you do? You can't stay here alone," protested Chick.

"Yes, I'll hold this crowd off till you come back. Hustle!"

Chick knew from his chief's tone that he must obey. So he made no further objection, but bolted through the doorway at full speed.

Nick knew that there was a quick and easy avenue to Chatham Square in this direction, by way of a saloon. Chick could be back with the men placed at his disposal by Lieutenant Ironstone in a very few minutes.

What the detective had to do was to keep the way clear for the return of his assistant with reinforcements.

Nick Carter had supplied himself with two automatic revolvers. Under cover of the darkness, he drew both and held them ready for action.

So, when Jeremiah Johnson came rushing down to see what the noise meant, and hastily lighted another lamp, he found himself facing the muzzles of a pair of wicked-looking revolvers, with his late customer, the supposed cattle dealer from Colorado, holding two steady forefingers on the triggers.

One glance at the revolvers was enough for so shrewd a man as Jeremiah Johnson to understand what had happened.

It was the police, of course, and this pretended cattle dealer was a detective!

"Hands up!" ordered Nick.

Ducking suddenly, Jeremiah Johnson tried to rush across the room.

As he did so, one of Nick Carter's pistols roared, and a bullet sang so close to Johnson's ear that he threw himself flat upon the floor.

"All right!" he growled. "I'll give in!"

"You'd better," was the detective's grim response.

"The next time I shoot, I'll hit you. I could have done it then if I'd tried."

Nick saw that there were five good-sized bulging chamois bags on the table, and that Marmaduke Powers was reaching over to take them away.

The detective trained one of his pistols on Powers.

"Let those bags alone!" he commanded. "And everybody stand still till I tell you to move."

The authority one determined man can exercise over seven when he has a pair of pistols to back him was never better exemplified than in this instance.

Every man of the seven had a pistol about him. Yet not one dared to reach for his weapon.

How long would Chick be? That was the question that ran through Nick Carter's brain again and again.

He did not suppose he could keep the seven men off indefinitely.

Sooner or later one of them would get up enough nerve to resist him. That would give the others courage, and he would find himself one against seven, with at least six of the seven bent on murder.

This came sooner than he had expected.

Jeremiah Johnson had got to his feet, and was standing against the wall, with his hands up like the others.

But Johnson was as cunning as a lynx. He was watching for the first indication of wavering attention upon the part of the detective.

Nick was listening for the return of Chick, with the plain-clothes men.

Even when they should come, the odds against them would be seven to five. But that wouldn't be anything. Nick had practically taken the seven of them prisoners now. Only—he did not know how to secure them single-handed.

"Ah! Here they come!" muttered Nick at last.

It was then that Jeremiah Johnson saw his chance—or thought he did.

With a shout to the others, he bounded upon the bags on the table. He snatched two of them, fell upon the floor, and was shielded by the table before Nick could fire.

The others grabbed the remaining bags, and three of the Loop Gang flung themselves upon the detective.

He fired his pistols. But his momentary distraction, when he believed he heard Chick coming, interfered with his aim. Before he had time to level the weapons again, he was in the middle of a struggling, fighting group.

But if Nick could not use his pistols to shoot, there was nothing to prevent his employing them as clubs.

One, two, three!

Down went three of the Loop gang under his terrific onslaught. Then he sprang upon Marmaduke Powers, who had two of the chamois bags in his hands.

Powers was a powerful man, and as active as a cat. As Nick came to him, he swung one of the bags at the detective's head. If it had struck, it might have brained him.

But it missed, and the momentum of the attack took Powers off his feet.

In an instant Nick was on top of him. Holding his man to the floor with a terrific grip on the back of his neck, he tore the bags out of his grasp.

Johnson had disappeared with two of the bags, and the fourth of the Loop gangsters, Phil Levy, who had not been disabled, was reaching for the last one. He intended to make his way through the narrow hall by which Chick had gone to get the policemen.

This was Phil Levy's mistake.

Hardly had he gone through the doorway, when there was a tremendous uproar, and almost at once, Mr. Levy was led back, handcuffed, by one of the officers.

The two other policemen and Chick came back with them.

Powers made a supreme effort to get himself free as he heard the others coming. He was nearly successful. Pulling himself partly from beneath Nick Carter, he snatched a revolver from his pocket and pressed the muzzle against the detective's temple.

It was as dangerous a moment as Nick had ever known. His hands were pinned to his sides, and it would not take the hundredth part of a second for the ruffian jammed against him to press his finger on the trigger.

Had not Marmaduke Powers given way to an evil impulse to gloat over his intended victim, nothing could have saved the detective's life.

But Powers stopped to whisper in his ear: "I don't know who you are. But this is where you pass away. You're a detective, and that's enough for me. You don't get these stones, because—"

That was all. There was a loud report, and Marmaduke Powers fell over, dead.

One of the policemen had saved Nick Carter's life by shooting this would-be murderer through the head.

There was no time to think about that now, however.

"Look out for those three bags!" shouted Nick, as Powers crumpled up on the floor. "I'm going after the other two!"

He bounded up the stairs, pushed up the trap that Johnson was just in the act of closing, and caught that estimable gentleman by the throat.

Jeremiah Johnson had been a professional wrestler and boxer before he took to the more profitable business of receiving stolen goods and running a shady pawnbroker's establishment.

It was no easy task that Nick found on his hands, therefore.

At the first tug, Johnson got away from his assailant, and tried to retaliate by seizing Nick by the throat.

"Not just yet!" said Nick, as he locked his arms around Johnson's shoulders, holding his hands down as if in a steel vice. "This is where you'll have to give up."

At this moment the heavy beard the detective had worn in his character of a Western horse dealer was pulled away, and Jeremiah Johnson recognized him.

"Nick Carter?" he gasped.

"At your service," was the calm reply.

He swung Johnson over on his back, and kneeling on him, held him a helpless prisoner, with his arms and hands doubled underneath.

"You're breaking my arms!" groaned Johnson.

"I'm sorry for that," was Nick's response. "Here, Chick! Slip your handcuffs on this gentleman's wrists."

"Behind?" asked Chick, as he came out of the open trap.

"Yes. I wouldn't trust his hands in front of him, even with handcuffs on the wrists."

The bracelets were soon adjusted, and Nick picked up the two chamois bags that Jeremiah Johnson had dropped when attacked by the detective.

Ten minutes later five of the seven rascals were on their way to the police station in a "hurry-up wagon."

The other two, who did not go, were Marmaduke Powers, who was conveyed to the morgue, and Asa Beveridge, who had slipped away in the confusion.

"Let's see what there is here, Chick."

The wagons had both departed, and Nick and his assistant were seated in front of the table in the basement, with the doors locked.

Before them were the five chamois bags. Nick deliberately opened them one after the other.

"Well, chief, what do you think of it?" asked Chick, when they had examined the contents of the whole five

bags. "Are they the stones from the mines up the river, or from the Great Pagoda at Bangkok?"

"They are from the mines," replied Nick quietly. "At a rough estimate I should say these stones are worth between four and five million dollars."

Chick whistled softly.

"That's a lot of big money," he remarked.

"And in these bags are a lot of big rubies and diamonds," said Nick. "There are a few more down at Potter's. He'll have to give them up, although I shall have to arrange for his keeping enough to make up the ten thousand dollars he has paid. I can get Ribiero to do that easily enough."

"Who got the ten thousand dollars?" asked Chick.

"Asa Beveridge, I believe. We shall have to look after Asa later."

"And Grantley?"

"Yes. I want Grantley. I haven't done all the work for Señor Ribiero I should like," returned Nick thoughtfully. "Some day I'll get Grantley—much sooner than he expects, or I am mistaken."

"What shall we do with these stones?" asked Chick. "Take them up to our house?"

"That's all we can do," was the detective's response. "Go to the store upstairs and use Jeremiah Johnson's telephone. Call up Maloney, and tell him to bring the car down here at once."

"All right!"

"Wait a moment! When you have Danny Maloney, call up Señor Ribiero, at the Hotel Supremacy, and tell him to hurry around to our house. If I can, I'm going to pass these stones to him right away."

In half an hour the chamois bags of gems were safe in the hands of Señor Ribiero, who was overwhelmed with gratitude and joy.

"If I could only get those other jewels that were taken from the Great Pagoda, I should feel that I'd done enough to make my king grateful to me as long as he lives," remarked Ribiero, when his first transports over the recovery of the stones from the mine had subsided. "But I suppose I cannot hope—"

"I intend to get those jewels for you," interrupted Nick Carter quietly.

THE END.

Further efforts of Nick Carter and his assistant to bring those master rogues, Grantley and Beveridge, to justice will be found in the next issue of this weekly, No. 129, out February 27th. The story is entitled "The Jewels of Wat Chang; or, Nick Carter and the Avenger."

BETRAYED BY A BIRD.

A trifle sometimes leads to the detection of a fault or crime. A theatrical musician owned an ebony flute with silver keys. He valued it highly, but as one of the upper notes was defective, he seldom used it.

A young man lodged with the musician, and between the two a close friendship existed. One night the ebony flute disappeared, having, no doubt, been stolen. Suspicion fell on several persons, but nothing could be proved against any of them. Not long afterward, the lodger went to live in a town a few miles off, but as the friendship between the two men still existed they occasionally visited each other.

Nearly a year afterward the musician paid his friend a visit, and was pleased to find him in possession of a beautiful bullfinch, which could distinctly whistle three tunes. The performance was perfect, with this exception, that whenever he came to a high note he invariably skipped it, and went on to the next.

A little reflection convinced the musician that the note in which the bullfinch was imperfect was the deficient one on his lost flute. So convinced was he that he questioned his ex-lodger on the subject. He at once tremblingly confessed his guilt, and that all the bird knew had been taught him on the stolen instrument.

ON A DARK STAGE.

By ROLAND ASHFORD PHILLIPS.

(This interesting story was commenced in No. 127 of NICK CARTER STORIES. Back numbers can always be obtained from your news dealer or the publishers.)

CHAPTER IV.

A CASE OF NERVE.

For the fraction of a second Mrs. Wold's announcement, sudden as it was, robbed Klein of speech. Then the full truth dawning upon him, he spoke sharply into the mouth-piece of the telephone.

"Mrs. Wold! How did this happen? When did Mr. Delmar die? Let me have the particulars!"

He received no answer. He repeated his questions.

"Mrs. Wold! Can't you hear me?"

Still no reply.

"They've rung off!" the operator spoke up mildly. "Shall I get them again?"

"Yes, please."

For several minutes the girl tried to get Bryant eight thousand. Finally she turned to Klein.

"Sorry, sir, but they don't answer."

With an impatient exclamation, Klein handed a dime to her and started for the door. At the same moment a man who had been standing near the open door of the booth followed him and touched his arm.

Klein whirled. "What is it?"

"You'll pardon me, but I just heard what you were saying over the telephone. Were you a friend of Mr. Delmar?"

"I considered myself such," answered Klein, in no mood for talk with a stranger.

"Then you did not know anything about this accident until just now?" the other ventured to ask.

"Not a word. I can't seem to believe it. Why, I was with Delmar only last night."

The stranger betrayed instant concern. "I don't suppose you have read the morning papers?"

"Not one."

"I represent the *Morning News*," announced the reporter—for such he was. "Naturally, when I overheard you asking for Delmar a moment ago I was interested. Possibly you could give me some information—"

"About what?"

"You just said you were with him shortly before he was found murdered," began the other.

"Murdered!" broke from Klein's lips. "Good Heaven! You mean to say Delmar has been murdered?"

"That's how the police have sized it up," declared the other. "Of course, they may be mistaken."

"Yes, but how? Where?" Klein insisted.

"Here's the *News*. It'll tell you everything."

The reporter jerked a folded paper from his pocket and thrust it into Klein's hand. The latter accepted it, his eyes leaping immediately to the black heading on the first page. Being a lover of the sensational, the *Morning News* had seized upon this mystery, and had spread the glaring details over four columns.

The heavy type at the top announced the gist of the story. Beneath it, in a smaller font, ran the following:

"Charles Delmar, an actor, was found unconscious on the roof of his boarding house early this morning by the police, who had been called there by Mrs. Wold, the landlady, to arrest an alleged sneak thief. Four hours later, Delmar died. The sole mark of violence was a small bruise just back of the right ear, which, according to the physician summoned, would not have resulted fatally had Delmar been in good health.

"It was later learned that the murdered man had long suffered from a weakened heart, and had had frequent fainting spells. The shock of even the slightest blow would have been sufficient to cause death.

"The one clue upon which the police now base their hopes of finding the assailant, is the sneak thief whom Mrs. Wold discovered in her hall just before the arrival of the police. This man attempted to attack her, and managed to escape by putting out the lights.

"What appears to be conclusive evidence that this man had something to do with the crime is the fact that he was wearing Delmar's clothes at the moment he was seen by Mrs. Wold. A good description was given to the police, and his arrest is expected.

"When found, Delmar was clad in a worn gray suit, bearing the label of a San Francisco clothing house. Nothing was found in the pockets."

Klein looked up from his paper, a faint color touching his cheeks. Delmar dead! And he himself hunted for the crime! What an end to the innocent adventure! What a ghastly trick Fate had—

"At what hour last night did you see Mr. Delmar?" the reporter inquired suddenly.

Klein's eyes looked into the other's. For several seconds neither of them moved or changed expression. The reporter was a young fellow, apparently not more than twenty, neatly dressed, and with peculiar blue eyes set far apart under well-arched brows. He did not in any way appeal to Klein as being the usual type of newspaper man.

What the reporter saw during that brief half minute, was a slim, plainly dressed, clear-skinned young man of about his own age, who possessed gray eyes that somehow instantly reminded him of hard sunlight on polished steel. They were eyes that challenged. Swiftly, mentally, the reporter was checking off the description of the sneak thief given him by Mrs. Wold. It tallied exactly with the gray-eyed man before him.

Intuitively Klein read the other's mind. The interval was brittle with expectancy. Klein had thoughtlessly confessed being with the murdered man last night, and the news-getter had leaped to the one conclusion. Klein now found himself to be in exactly the same position as he had been last night, before the unknown had opened an avenue of escape.

To risk capture now, without a bit of evidence to support his story would be sheer folly. Two charges would be brought against him—one for the murder of Delmar, the other for an attack on Mrs. Wold.

In reading the newspaper story, one thing had troubled him—set his mind to working swiftly in another channel. This was the announcement that Delmar had been discovered on the roof of his house clad in a gray suit of clothes, bearing the label of a San Francisco clothier. How had the change been made? Why?

The reporter spoke first, his voice barely above a whisper. "Maybe we'd better step over here in the corner and talk."

Klein hesitated.

The reporter, aware of the situation, spoke again. "The house detective is standing over there against the telephone desk," he said quietly. "I know him very well. I could call him, and have you—"

Klein, by following the newspaper man toward the corner where a couple of big chairs faced the low window, acknowledged temporarily his defeat. They sat down.

"I was at Mrs. Wold's an hour after Delmar was found on the roof," began the reporter. "She gave me a very good description of the sneak thief whom she found in her hall—found wearing Delmar's clothes."

"Well?" answered Klein calmly—he had not been an actor three years without gaining some self-possession. "Go on!"

"I must admit," the other said, "that I'm puzzled."

"So am I," returned Klein.

"You appeared to be very much surprised upon learning that your friend was dead. I was watching you. If it was acting, I congratulate you."

Klein shrugged, and waited for the other to continue. He noticed that the house detective was still at the telephone desk carrying on a conversation with the operator.

"Look here!" suddenly broke from the reporter. "Why won't you tell me the whole story? You might as well. The police will force it out of you in the end. They always do."

Klein's lips set in a hard, straight line, and once again the reporter saw the steellike glint leap to his eyes.

"Would you believe what I told you?" Klein asked.

"I—I could form my own conclusions."

"That's the usual way with your newspaper man."

"Now, see here!"—the reporter leaned forward in his chair, breathing rapidly—"I can call the house detective. He will hold you while I get Mrs. Wold. She'll identify you. Then in fifteen minutes you'll be locked up."

Klein smiled into the flushed face of the speaker. "I wouldn't think of differing with you, only—"

"Only what?" interrupted the reporter.

"Well, what you have suggested would probably happen," Klein said, quietly amused at the reporter's excitement. "Your plan would work beautifully, only—he hesitated—"only it would be an extremely bad move."

"A bad move?" The reporter looked indignant. "Of course it would be a bad move—for you!"

"You're pretty young for a newspaper man, aren't you?" Klein asked.

"Young? I'm over twenty. It's we young chaps who really count in this game." The reporter seemed impressed with his own statement.

"Granted, my boy," answered Klein. "But how long have you been in the newspaper game?"

"What's that got to do with the present situation?" angrily exclaimed the other, realizing for the first time that Klein was smiling, and, to all appearances, enjoying the talk. "This is a serious matter. And as a representative of the press I—"

"Have you been in the game, as you term it, long enough to appreciate the value of a beat, a scoop?" mildly interrupted Klein.

The reporter's blue eyes opened wide. "A scoop?" he repeated. "Of course I appreciate the value of one!"

He had been in the business just long enough for that word to have a proper and lasting effect. An older man might have been skeptical. Such an expression came to his pink-and-white face as might have appeared upon a ten-year-old's had a dish of ice cream been suddenly placed before him.

"I suppose, then, you realize what would happen if you called to the house detective, and brought Mrs. Wold here, and had me taken to the police station?" Klein went on to ask.

"Why—why—" the reporter was floundering with the question. "I suppose the murder case would be—" he stopped, as a new light sprang to his eyes. "Oh, I see now. I see what you're getting at. If I had you arrested every newspaper man in the city would know of it! Of course! They would all have the story—my story—the story that belongs to me, wouldn't they?"

"I'm glad you understand at last," Klein said.

"By Jove! You're right! I hadn't thought of that. I won't dare let this end of the story get out until I can get it all, and—and get it to my paper."

"It will be a big story, won't it?" encouraged Klein, helping along the other's rising enthusiasm. "I imagine it will boost your salary, too."

The colt reporter was trembling with excitement now; his hands were shaking. The prospect of this scoop had upset him.

"Then you'll—you'll give me the whole story?" he asked, half in doubt.

"The whole story, yes," responded Klein. "But not here."

"Why not?" the other wavered.

"We may be interrupted. Other reporters might be snooping around. You don't want them to—"

"You're right. I hadn't thought of that possibility, either. I'll have them give us a room here."

"Haden't you better have witnesses?" Klein suggested, in a whisper. "It's the usual thing, you know." He assumed a mysterious air, which was instantly absorbed by the colt reporter.

"Yes," the latter answered, his own voice lowering. "Yes. I guess that would be better. But where can we go?"

"What better place than your own newspaper office?" Klein said. "You'd be right among your friends—and your editor would be impressed by the boldness of the thing."

"Yes, but—" began the other.

"I can well imagine the heading for the story," Klein broke in quickly. "Morning News reporter bests entire police force. Single-handed he arrests Delmar suspect, who, cornered, tells the whole story. Full details of the thrilling adventure."

This picture was too much for the colt—principally because he *was* a colt. He jumped to his feet. "Come along!" he cried excitedly. "We haven't any time to waste. I'll call a taxi."

Klein started to object—for a taxicab had not entered into his scheme of things—but before he could open his mouth the reporter was motioning to a taxicab man standing at the curb. Klein was thankful to be out of range of that house detective's eye, so he followed the reporter into the cab.

"Morning News office—and hurry!" ordered the latter.

The chauffeur shrugged his shoulders lazily, as if he did not much care whether he obeyed or not, swung the machine around, and started swiftly down the street. As he did so a sudden idea flashed to Klein's mind. Stealing a glance at the reporter's face, he smiled to himself. The curtain of the little drama had rung up unexpectedly; but he had kept his wits about him, and unless he was greatly mistaken, the act was to have an abrupt finish. It was a case of putting on an impromptu performance.

The cab bowled along merrily—a trifle too merrily, Klein thought, for it was with increasing difficulty that the passengers could hold their seats. Policemen looked sharply in their direction. Everything seemed to be going exactly as Klein had hoped for.

The two passengers did not exchange words: the colt seemed to be busy mapping out his great story, his cheeks still suffused with color, and his eyes sparkling. Klein, cool and confident, as befitting an actor who has well memorized his lines, sat far back on the soft cushions, awaiting his cue. It came in the shape of a particularly severe jolt of the cab. Klein leaned forward and tapped the driver on the shoulder.

"Don't you think you are driving a trifle too fast?"

The chauffeur, who was slightly under the weather from an early-morning drink or two, turned his head, and out of the corner of his mouth retorted: "If you don't like it—get out an' walk!"

Klein looked at him a moment, then said: "We have engaged this cab, and have no intention of getting out until we arrive at our destination."

The chauffeur uttered an imprecation. "I'm thinkin' you two are a couple of cheap sports," he observed. "Don't think you ever rode in a taxi before."

"Never mind what you think," Klein replied. "We're not interested. We only want you to use a—"

The chauffeur interrupted by throwing off the clutch and running the machine close to the curb. They were opposite Union Square.

"I ain't in the habit of takin' orders from the likes of you," the chauffeur cried. "You understand that? Why, for a plugged cent I'd punch that lily-white map of yours."

His eyes were blazing, and he was growing more and more indignant. Klein smiled at him in a cool way.

"I'd like to accommodate you with a plugged cent, my friend," he said, "but unfortunately we are in a hurry."

The driver sneered. "I thought so. All your kind is the same. You're strong on the hot-air proposition, but when it comes to puttin' up a pair of dukes you crawfish. Why, you're both a couple of cheap—"

Exactly what happened was more or less a mystery to the reporter. Klein stepped from the cab and met the irate chauffeur. The latter swung wildly, and Klein nimbly ducked. A crowd began to gather. The colt reporter,

eager to get to the newspaper office, and still more eager to get the supposed murderer safely away, got out of the cab and pushed through the crowd. Believing him to be a mere spectator, like themselves, they fought against his intrusion.

This started another row. Much excited, the reporter crashed a doubled fist to the point of a man's chin. Soon the whole crowd was in an uproar. A policeman forced his way to the seat of the trouble. And then—

The newspaper man saw the chauffeur standing alone in a cleared circle, arms extended, fists doubled, face inflamed, yet with an incredulous and surprised look in his eyes.

"What's the trouble?" roared the officer.

"He ducked," the chauffeur said. "What you know about that? The big wind made a get-away."

"Got away?" the reporter cried, his heart sinking. "Got away! Where? How?"

No one volunteered a reply. The amazed chauffeur, sobered by this time, called his "cowardly" opponent some unprintable names. The officer made a futile effort to scatter the crowd. The reporter, conscious that his brilliant air castles were tottering about his shoulders, berated the luck that had robbed him of a big scoop.

And while this scene was being enacted, a plainly dressed young man, with steel-gray eyes and cheeks flushed as though he had been running, threaded his way in and out of the cluttered traffic, and finally hopped to the platform of a moving uptown surface car, about a block away from where the disturbance had occurred.

As the car ran slowly past the crowd gathered about a taxicab, he turned and looked out of the window—and smiled. The reporter was explaining something to the officer, and the chauffeur was climbing back to his seat.

"Good-by, Mr. Colt," Klein said, under his breath. "Sorry to spoil your scoop. Better luck next time."

CHAPTER V.

TOD MAKES A DECLARATION.

Half an hour or so later the city editor of the *Morning News* looked up from his desk to find, standing expectantly before him, the agitated figure of Irving Tod, reporter.

"Well," he snapped, "what do you want?"

"I found the man suspected of murdering Delmar," Tod began. The editor jerked back his head.

"The devil you did!"

"Yes, sir. But he got away from me at Union Square."

And then, while the city editor listened, Tod poured out the story, from the moment of meeting the suspect in the side lobby of the Albany Hotel, to the moment he had disappeared through the crowd at Union Square. When he had finished, all but breathless, the editor crashed a fist to his desk.

"Of all the blockheads!" he cried. "Did you suppose that such a man was going to ride peacefully down to this office and give himself up?"

"He—suggested it," faltered Tod.

"Of course he did! He knew you had him trapped. He was afraid of that house detective. All he wanted was to get out of the hotel without making a scene. Oh, you're a smart one, Tod! A real, clever newspaper man, you are! Keep this up, and I'll put you at the head of the staff, and give you a hundred a week." He flung up his

hands hopelessly. "Good Lord!" he groaned. "What an opportunity you had! What a story a live reporter could have corralled!"

"Then—then you think his fight with the taxicab driver was just a scheme to escape me?" wavered Tod.

"Do I think it?" The city editor rolled his eyes ceilingward. "Look here, Tod," he added, after a pause, "by all the rules and regulations of a newspaper office I ought to connect the toe of my shoe with the seat of your trousers and lift you out into Park Row. And if it wasn't for the fact that my daughter would probably throw six kinds of fits in as many seconds, I'd do it."

"I'm sorry," breathed Tod. "I suppose I am a boob. But I've learned my lesson, and—and it won't happen again. Please don't tell Claire."

In spite of his anger, the city editor grinned. The chink in his otherwise impenetrable armor was his, daughter, Claire. Tod knew it—had known it for more years than one. It was because of Claire that Irving Hamilton Tod, left to squander the fortune of his deceased senior, had decided upon a profession. The girl simply would not listen to the pleadings of a waster, as she termed it. The man who won her would have to accomplish something in this world. She had innocently suggested newspaper work, probably because what was good enough for her father was good enough for her husband-to-be. And so newspaper work it was.

"Don't tell Claire, eh?" The editor continued to grin. "It would be a good lesson to you if I did, young man."

"It'll never happen again. I promise you that, Mr. Reed," said Tod. "You think because I was left a lot of money that I'm brainless. I'm not. I'm ambitious, Mr. Reed."

Reed laughed. "You've shown it to-day, haven't you?"

"Yes, but—"

"You've cheated your paper out of the best scoop of the year," he interrupted sternly, lapsing back to his usual gruff tone. "Why, it would have been a slam to the whole police force. Likely as not some other paper will get hold of the story, and make us the laughingstock of—"

Tod's blue eyes hardened. "How long will you give me to find this fellow again?" he suddenly demanded.

"Find him?"

"That's what I said, Mr. Reed. Find that suspect—the man who got away from me to-day."

The editor fastened an amused glance upon the embryonic reporter, at the same time surprised at the tone of voice the other had suddenly assumed.

"So you still believe you're the smarter man?" he asked.

"I—I don't know," Tod answered. "But I do want another chance."

"Go ahead and take it." Reed pulled a sheaf of papers toward him. "Heaven forbid that I would ever deny an ambitious young man a fair chance," he added, with a touch of sarcasm.

The retort was not lost upon Tod. He realized, bitterly enough, that he deserved it, and still—

"Very well, Mr. Reed," he answered, trying to keep his tone normal. "I'm going to show you I mean business."

"That would be a great shock to me, Tod."

Color flamed to the reporter's cheeks. "Don't worry if I'm not around the office for the next few weeks," he managed to say.

"Well, Tod"—Reed apparently was more interested in his papers than otherwise—"it will be difficult for us to get

the paper to press without you, of course. We'll all miss you dreadfully. But be sure and write me, won't you?"

"I won't show my face around here until I've got the man I want," indignantly replied Tod.

"We'll manage to survive the ordeal. I only hope none of the other boys will take it to heart."

"You can explain the situation to—Claire," Tod managed to say. "She—she'll believe in me."

"Oh, ho!" Reed broke out, interested for the first time. "So you don't intend seeing Claire until you've pulled off this Sherlock stunt! Is that it?"

"That's it, Mr. Reed," replied the colt, in a manner that suggested a great sacrifice. "I'm sick and tired of being made fun of. It's always been this way. I know I'm a green hand at this game, but we've all got to make mistakes. Just because I inherited a little money everybody thinks I ought to travel around with a nurse. But I'll show them! And I'll show you, too, Mr. Reed, and all of the *News* staff. I'm going to surprise you."

"Don't do that, Tod," Reed pleaded, with mock seriousness. "I've a rather weak heart. The shock might—"

"When I come back you'll be only too glad to keep me on your staff," Tod broke in.

"All right, Tod. If you insist I suppose we'll have to let you have a shot at it. But do be careful. And don't forget to take your man along. It might be a good plan to take a secretary, too. And when you get your suspect, send me a wire. I'll keep the paper waiting, and we'll get out an extra, with red headlines."

Tod was hurrying for the door. His ears were burning. Everybody was against him! The whole world laughed at him! If it were not for Claire he would chuck it all, and go to Europe.

"Hold on a second, Tod!" Reed called to him. "You'd better go in and see Reese and give him some details of your—adventure. We'll blow it up and play it for a feature to-morrow."

CHAPTER VI.

A NEW ROLE.

Because Irving Hamilton Tod did not stick to the facts of the case, proving beyond doubt that he was not cut out for a successful reporter, and because Reese, the star man, did some telling embroidery work upon it, and the copy reader passed it along without much blue penciling, a certain interested person, who happened to be one of the principals in the little drama, laughed to himself when he read the *News* the following morning. This interested person was our friend, Hobart Klein.

"What a story!" he murmured to himself, reading the black headlines for the third time. "If that colt wrote it, he is certainly an artist."

The statement, in big type, read:
"News Reporter Lands Delmar Murder Suspect.
"Police as Usual, Are all At Sea About the Mysterious Crime.

"The Suspect Confesses, Then Makes His Escape."

Below this, in smaller type, ran the following:

"In the side lobby of the Albany Hotel, yesterday noon, a reporter of the *Morning News*, alone and single-handed, captured a stranger who afterward confessed to the murder of Charles Delmar, the actor found unconscious on the roof of a boarding house in Forty-first Street early

yesterday. Later, after a terrific struggle in a taxicab, the man escaped. The reporter is badly injured.

"The police, as usual, are completely at fault, and have discovered no 'clue. The *News* staff of reporters are working independently, and hope to land the criminal before long.

"The fugitive, as described by the reporter, who lies in a serious condition at the hospital, is a husky six-footer, heavily muscled, dark-faced, and unshaven. His eyes are narrow and wicked; lips thin and twisted at the corners. He wore a black suit and checkered cap, and is apparently an old hand at the business."

Then followed a column of details, more or less new, relating to the adventure in the Albany lobby.

"I suppose that reporter is wearing a hero medal now," Klein said to himself. "Well, he deserves it. No joke being attacked by a brute of a murderer with a wicked eye and twisted lips."

He laughed, and tossed away the paper. "However," he mused, "that description will prevent me from being bothered until—"

Just what he should do in this critical situation had been fully decided upon, even before he left the street car the day before at noon, after making his somewhat dramatic escape from the taxicab. He had found Maddern, and talked with him for half an hour. Maddern was positive that it was Klein's brown suit he had seen that night in the Albany Hotel.

"It's a peculiar shade of brown," he said, "and I spotted it when I first came through the door. The man was stepping into the cage. I could not see his face."

"And what time was that?"

"About five minutes to eight."

"You saw what you took to be my hat, too?" Klein asked.

"Yes. You had it on the day we met in the Knickerbocker Agency. Remember I spoke to you about it? It was a noticeable hat, all right. You don't see many high crowns and narrow brims this season—especially in straw hats. Besides, I immediately spotted the brown silk band. I tell you, Klein," he went on earnestly, "that suit and hat were yours."

"I can't quite see how—"

"You didn't seem surprised to hear of it at breakfast time," replied Maddern, with a frown. "I mentioned the fact. You laughed, and said he was a friend of yours."

"Have you read the papers to-day?" Klein asked.

"Some of them. Why?"

"Well, an actor was found murdered on the roof of a boarding house in Forty-first Street early this morning. Did you read that?"

Maddern nodded. "I did."

"That actor was my friend—Delmar."

"The Dickens you say!" Maddern exclaimed. "And he was the chap you changed clothes with?"

"He was. Now do you see what I'm driving at?"

Maddern's eyes widened, and he whistled softly. "Good Lord! Of course. If your friend had on your suit, how was it I saw—"

"You probably saw the suit," Klein interrupted, "but not the friend."

"Yes, but how—"

"When Delmar left his room and went out over the fire escape, to avoid meeting the landlady, he was wearing

my brown suit and my straw hat; but when he was found, shortly after midnight, by the police, who had been called to arrest me, he was wearing an old gray suit, and no hat at all."

"Then who the deuce did I see wearing your clothes?" asked Maddern.

"That's the chap I've got to find. That man, whoever he is, and whatever his intentions were, slugged Delmar, changed clothes with him, and appeared at the Albany Hotel—provided, of course, that you, Maddern, saw my suit there."

"I could swear to that," Maddern declared.

"Good! Then the question is: Who was it you saw stepping into the hotel cage?"

"We'll soon settle that," said Maddern. "I'll go to the hotel and ask for Beyer, the manager of the Hudson Stock Company. If he signed a contract with a man in that brown suit he'll know it, all right."

Maddern went to the hotel, asked for Beyer, but learned that the manager had departed for Hudson, taking with him the men he had engaged. This much he told Klein a few minutes later. This turn of events added to the mystery. Klein had overlooked the possibility of the manager signing more than one man.

"Look here, Klein," Maddern went on to say, "why are you suspecting that your friend's assailant was an actor, and that he was after the job with Beyer?"

"That's merely a supposition," Klein answered. "I've got to work on some clue, haven't I? I'll run this to earth, and if it doesn't pan out I'll try another."

"Do you mean that you intend getting at the bottom of this affair? That you are going to take all the time and trouble to play a Nick Carter engagement just to—"

"You're forgetting the real issue, Maddern. I'm placed in a ticklish position. I've got to find the murderer in order to clear myself of suspicion."

"I see," Maddern said slowly. "It's a bad turn of luck all around, isn't it? Wish I could help you."

"You might have a chance, later on," Klein returned. "So cheer up."

They parted, Maddern swinging over to Broadway, and Klein turning up the steps of his rooming house. Before he went inside he called to a passing newsboy and bought some early editions of the evening papers.

In his room he looked them over, hopefully and curiously. None of them, however, treated the Delmar incident with such a spread as had the *News*. Three of the papers had a column apiece—and on the inside pages. The other two did not give such long accounts. But, short or long, no light new to Klein was shed by any of the papers on the mystery that had become such a serious matter to him—that threatened his very life.

"It can't blow over too soon to suit me," Klein said to himself. "I've got a difficult task on my hands, but if the newspapers will only keep quiet I may be able to accomplish it."

TO BE CONTINUED.

"HE SAID NOTHIN', MUM."

A woman said to her servant girl:

"Bridget, go out and see if Mr. Marks, the butcher at the corner, has pigs' feet."

The dutiful servant went out, and returned.

"Well, what did he say?" asked the mistress.

"Sure, he said nothin', mum."

"Has he got pigs' feet?"

"Faith, I couldn't see, mum—he has got his boots on."

HIS ANSWERS.

In the northwest provinces of India there lived a fakir, who seldom made much use of his tongue in conversation. When a nod or a sign would do, he spared his words. A Mohammedan gentleman one day went up to him, accompanied by some friends, and said, with mock humility:

"May I trouble you, holy father, with three questions?"

The fakir nodded.

"The first question, holy father, is about God. People say there is a God; but I cannot see Him, and no one can show Him to me, and, therefore, I cannot believe in Him. Will you explain?"

The fakir gave a nod.

"My second question," continued the gentleman, "is about the devil. The Koran says Satan is made of fire. But if so, how can hell fire hurt him? Will you explain that, too?"

A nod.

"The third question concerns myself. The Koran says every action of man is decreed; now, if it is decreed that I must do a certain thing, how can God judge me for it, having Himself decreed it? Please, holy father, answer me."

The fakir nodded; and while the party stood looking at him, he seized a clod of earth and flung it with all his might at the face of his questioner.

The gentleman became very angry, and caused the fakir to be arrested, and brought before the judge to whom he made his complaint, adding that the pain was so great he could hardly bear it.

The judge asked the fakir if the story were true.

"This gentleman came to me with his companions," replied the fakir, "and asked me three questions, which I carefully answered."

"He did no such thing," exclaimed the gentleman, "but threw the clod of earth in my face."

The judge looked at the fakir, and said:

"Explain yourself."

"Assuredly," was the fakir's answer. "This gentleman told me that people said there was a God, but that he could not see Him, nor could any one show him God, and therefore he could not believe in Him. Now he says that he has pain in his face from the clod of earth I threw at him; but I cannot see it. Will you kindly ask him to show us his pain, for how can I believe in it if I cannot see it?"

The judge looked at the complainant, and both smiled.

"Again this gentleman asked how, if Satan were made of fire, hell fire could hurt him? Now he will admit that Father Adam was created of earth, and that he himself also is earth. But if he be of earth, how could earth hurt him?"

"As to the third question," said the fakir, drawing himself up, with great dignity, "if it was written in my fate that I should throw a clod in this gentleman's face, how could he, and how dare he, bring me here for so doing?"

The judge allowed that the fakir had answered the three questions with his clod, and dismissed him, advising him, however, to reply to future questions in a less offensive manner.

THE NEWS OF ALL NATIONS.

Wagner Not to Quit.

Is Hans Wagner through with baseball? The veteran shortstop of the Pittsburgh Pirates declares he is not. Admitting that he is forty-one years old and that his legs have slowed up and that he cannot cover as much territory as he used to do, he says he has a lot of playing ability left and expects another big season in 1915.

When Wagner was a boy he had to work. At sixteen he worked at a man's job in a coal mine and played baseball as a side line. His brother Al was playing with a club at Denison, Ohio, and he got Hans a job with the same club. After that baseball was Hans' business.

Fate Tricks Brave Soldier.

Fate has certainly played an unkind trick on Joseph Olschesky, of Trenton, N. J. After he had been through several uprisings in the Philippines and in China as a member of Company A, Fifteenth Infantry, and always escaped injury, he returned to Trenton, only to lose an arm while making sausage at the plant of the Margerum Provision Company.

The young man served very nearly four years in the army, has been in some lively skirmishes, and was noted for his daring. Some weeks ago he returned home and determined to settle down to the life of a peaceful citizen. When his arm was caught in the meat cutter, Olschesky displayed wonderful nerve. He told an assistant that if he didn't get a piece of rope quickly he would bleed to death. He walked to the ambulance and from the ambulance to the operating table at the hospital. He remained conscious until given an anesthetic.

New High-power Explosives.

Sabullite is the name of a new high-power explosive, tests of which have lately been made in British Columbia. It can be handled without danger, and is cheaper than dynamite, which has only about one third its destructive effect. It is used for blasting purposes only.

Some New Inventions.

William B. Gage, a telegraph operator of Columbia, Mo., has invented what he calls a "wait-on-yourself" table. It is a ball-bearing, revolving affair, turning whenever one of the guests desires. As Gage explains it, when a diner wants the mustard, he simply whirls the table around until the mustard is "furnished" him. How the other diners keep track of their own meals during the whirling process is not explained, but Gage had a carpenter build one of the tables for him, and it is in operation now in his home, where he says it is giving satisfaction.

An electrical machine has been invented to reset pins in bowling alleys. The new electrical "pin boy" will reset the pins in a fraction of a second. An electric motor, controlled by magnets, does the work.

A camera small enough to be swallowed to photograph the interior of the stomach has been invented by a Danish surgeon.

A recently patented stairway for reaching seldom-used

portions of buildings folds into a ceiling and is hidden by a panel when not in use.

Unbreakable telephone mouthpieces and receivers are being made of steel, around which the rubber insulator is forced through under high pressure.

A lunch pail, with a lamp in the bottom, by which the contents can be heated, has been patented by a Pennsylvania inventor.

Finds \$3,200 Roll.

Abraham Levine, a tailor of New Haven, Conn., and an honest man, picked up a roll of bills containing \$3,200 which a customer had dropped on his floor. Levine ran after him. Counting the money and finding none missing, the customer, who was a traveling salesman, hurried on, muttering "Thanks." Levine is now sure that virtue is its own reward.

Town Has Disappeared.

The town of Luffman, S. D., is no more. It was situated not far from Lake City, the new town on the extension of the Fairmount & Veblen Railroad, and soon after the railroad reached Lake City, the business institution of Luffman started to move overland to the new town. None is left at Luffman.

Making Wash Sticks His Pleasure.

George Putnam, of Edwardsville, Mo., a wealthy retired bricklayer and member of a pioneer Madison County family, has a rather unusual method to while away his time. While many of his wealth would pass their winters in the South and the hot summers at the Northern resorts, Putnam remains in Edwardsville, rarely going away, and makes wash sticks, which he gives away.

Putnam has turned out more than 5,000 of these wash sticks, and he does it just to keep up a good appetite. He boards at one of the leading hotels, but early in the morning he goes to his shop on High Street, where he cuts out sticks, except during the extreme cold weather and hot weather.

He began making these sticks twenty years ago, while following his trade. Often while on a job he whittled out a stick during the dinner hour for another member of the gang or a friend. Everybody is welcome to a Putnam wash stick. He distributes them to friends and strangers, and often goes to the trouble to send one by mail to some one, the friend of a recipient of one.

Putnam collects dry-goods boxes, and they are knocked to pieces to furnish material. The sticks are cut out, planed down, and smoothed with sand paper.

He spent more than a month this fall in making canes from an oak tree, cut down when the new courthouse at Edwardsville was started.

Queen of Midgets Dies.

Miss Florence Tate, twenty-four inches tall and forty-six years old, artist and philanthropist, is dead. She weighed fifty-seven pounds and was a life invalid. Many years ago she refused a circus offer of \$100 a week that she might devote her time to aid of other invalids. For this purpose she was instrumental in the organization of

the "Shut-in Society," for invalids unable to leave their homes.

Miss Tate resided at Granite City, Ill., but had traveled extensively throughout the country. She was an artist of some ability, and many of her paintings have been exhibited in the East. She was the oldest of six children of Mr. and Mrs. Samuel Tate, of Flora, Ill. She was the smallest woman in the State.

Year's Casualties in Sport Fields.

	Killed.	Seriously Injured.
Hunting	111	162
Baseball	35	918
Football	13	3,000
Total	159	4,080

Carefully kept records show that the toll of life and limb exacted by sports in America is declining, year by year. Of the millions of red-blooded American men and boys who have gone into the woods with rifle or shotgun, played the great national game of baseball, or put their muscles to the strenuous tests of football, only 159 have met death this year. The injuries that the tabulators classed as serious total 4,080, and of this number fully half of those injured have entirely recovered.

The hunting fatalities of the year fell off from 135 last year, although the injuries jumped from 125 to 162. The comparison shows a satisfactory gain for sane hunting. A campaign of warning was waged in each of the eighteen States from which the figures are drawn. Wisconsin lost 33 hunters; Michigan, 27; Minnesota, 12. Michigan had 42 injured huntsmen; Wisconsin, 35, and Washington, 20. From the statistics of the game-license bureaus, it is estimated that 150,000 hunted deer during the open season.

Baseball, in which nearly every boy in America indulged, and fully one-fifth of American men took part, besides the numberless professional and semiprofessional players, makes a remarkably good showing with only 35 deaths attributable to injuries received in the game. Of this number 20 were hit by pitched balls, 5 were struck with bats, 4 overexerted themselves, 1 was hurt sliding to base, and 1 killed in a fight. Of the 918 injuries recorded as apparently serious, 314 were of broken limbs, 18 had concussion of the brain, 13 had their skulls fractured, 4 were paralyzed, 37 received serious sprains, 26 were spiked, 17 received fractures, 7 were put out of the running by dislocations, and 70 were victims of torn ligaments. In the minor leagues 116 were injured; in the American League, 69; National League, 61; Federal League, 56; and on college teams, 8.

Football, the most strenuous of American games, exacts a remarkably light toll this year. Of course, the death list of 13 does not convey the full seriousness of the game. Among the injured—and they are so many and constant that they could not all be accurately tabulated—many are permanently injured.

Collects Coin With Chewing Gum.

Keep your eyes open if you ever happen to be down in the subway at the Brooklyn Bridge station in New York around noon time. If there's a bit of salvage in sight, you'll see the only Subway Wrecker at work.

The S. W. is one of the subway employees who believes in improving each shining minute, as it were.

When it comes his lunch hour, he hurries through the sandwiches and milk on which he feasts, and then you may see him wandering up and down the two long platforms, a long, slender pole under his arm, and his eyes on the tracks.

Every once in a while the pole suddenly darts down toward the tracks and presently comes back with something transferred to the pocket of the Wrecker.

Edge up a bit closer to him and you will see that the end of the pole is tipped with a bit of gum, and that as a result of the last jab trackward a bright new copper penny had been recovered.

"Sure, it's worth while," the man said the other day to one curious enough to ask him a question or two. "I haven't anything else to do for a few minutes, and frequently I find something really worth while. Once I got a quarter."

Leper Early Has a Pal.

The isolation of John Early in his leprosarium, at Washington, D. C., was broken when Emil R. Grable, the district's second leper, joined him. The greeting between the two men was pathetic. Early, who has become accustomed to his solitary life, comforted the other leper all he could.

Grable has been furnished with the same kind of furniture Early has in his quarters in the stone detention house. While they do not occupy the same room, they can visit back and forth.

Make Paper of Cornstalks.

Following a series of experiments made by paper mills at the instance of the government, it has been announced that the product of cornstalks is an excellent substitute for wood pulp, while it can be obtained by the mills at much less cost. So successful have been the experiments that the Bureau of Plant Industry at Washington has sent a representative to McLean County, Ill., which holds the record in the production of corn. This representative will interview farmers concerning the price to be asked for stalks and also to get data regarding the expense of sending the stalks to the paper mills. Mills for cornstalk paper may be established in several parts of the West.

When Water Freezes it Purifies.

The discovery that many disease germs survived freezing led to natural ice from rivers becoming suspect and to artificial ice largely taking its place. But it has now been discovered that, in the process of freezing, the impurities are expelled by the ice into the surrounding water. And natural ice has this advantage over artificial, that it is exposed to the sun and air, and sunlight and fresh air are fatal to most disease germs.

Therefore, in the words of the Journal of the American Medical Association: "Natural ice cut from reasonably pure deep ponds or lakes and stored under sanitary conditions is clean. Artificial ice made from polluted water in dirty, insanitary factories is unsafe; natural ice cut from shallow, polluted ponds or from grossly polluted rivers is also unsafe. And dirty-appearing, cloudy ice may be infected as well as polluted; no such ice should be used in contact with food or drinks.

"Ice which is otherwise safe may become infected by improper handling—by being dragged across dirty streets

or sidewalks or distributed by unclean hands. This is the great source of danger. We may practically eliminate danger by avoiding the handling of ice with dirty hands, by washing the ice with pure water, and by using only clear ice."

Knife Used for Boy Criminal.

Clarke L. Borton, a Germantown, Pa., contractor, has decided to risk his fourteen-year-old son's life in a surgical operation in an effort to cure the boy's criminal tendencies. Judge Gorman consented, after sentencing the boy to the Glen Mills School for committing many robberies. The sentence was withdrawn pending the operation.

"I am convinced," said the father, "that my son's actions have been influenced by this depression. When he was six years old his head was injured, and his waywardness dates from that period. I believe he does not know right from wrong. Specialists have told me the boy is not criminal. I am sure he can be cured by an operation."

Breaks Leg, Becomes Author.

George Westall, of Cleveland, Ohio, for forty-seven years an employee of the Erie Railroad, is going to write stories the rest of his days.

If Westall makes a name for himself in the world he'll become famous. For he's known personally to almost every man in the Erie system, and it's doubtful if there's any railroader around Cleveland who doesn't know "old George."

Westall's leg was broken last summer. For weeks he lay helpless on a cot in his home.

"It was then I got the hunch about writing stories," he said. "It seemed as though every experience in my whole life arose before me in recollection as I lay in bed."

That's how "The Transformation of Jim Madden," Westall's first big story, came about. It's now in the hands of publishers for approval.

"It's probable I'll retire from railroading on a pension in June," he says. "Then I'll devote all the rest of my life to writing."

Soldier Describes Battle.

Everybody knows how difficult it is to give a terse and vivid description of a battle.

It would be hard to beat the following picture given by a wounded British soldier:

"First you 'ears a 'ell of a noise, and then the nurse says: 'Try and drink a little of this.'"

Wolgast Earns Fortune.

Old Hard Luck appears to be a twin brother to Ad Wolgast, scrapper from Cadillac, Mich. It looks at first glance as if the young man's jinx and his bank roll were about the same size—both fully developed.

If you don't happen to know it, Wolgast is a savage young fighter, who whipped nearly every 133-pounder within reach before he became champion, grabbed the title by defeating the greatest assimilator of punishment the world ever knew, honorably defended it against all attacks until he lost it through an unfortunate foul.

Incidentally Wolgast earned a vast fortune—vast for an athlete, at least—while he was doing all these things. It is estimated that he has taken down at least \$200,000 as his part of purses, theatrical exhibitions, and the like.

Further, the Cadillac boy has saved the greater part of it, and now may be accounted a rich man.

But misfortune constantly came to him. Here are some of the things that happened at various times:

1906—His left ear cauliflowered.

1907—Right ear scrambled and bow knotted to match.

1908—Bones in both hands broken and one knuckle knocked out of joint.

1909—Bridge of nose broken and surgical operation necessary.

1910—Left arm broken in bout with Jack Redmond. It mended only to be rebroken in bout with Tommy McFarland.

1911—Stricken with appendicitis on eve of bout with Freddie Welsh, and Willie Ritchie subbed for him, getting a chance that finally landed him the title from Wolgast.

1912—Bones of both hands broken again.

1913—Suffered serious attack of ptomaine poisoning; ribs cracked in bout with sparring partner.

1914—Left hand broken just prior to bout with Willie Ritchie; right hand broken in bout with Freddie Welsh.

Guilty of Kidnaping.

William Winchester, a miner, charged with kidnaping from the St. Lawrence Mine, in Butte, last August, Richard O'Brien, another miner, and aiding in his subsequent deportation, was found guilty in the district court at Bozeman, Mont. His punishment was fixed by the jury at two years in the State penitentiary.

Herbert Carey and C. W. Malone, also charged with the kidnaping in connection with the miners' disturbances last summer in Butte, are here awaiting trial.

Gloom at Vera Cruz.

All over Vera Cruz, Mexico, women, young and old, washerwomen, small storekeepers, servants, and workers of humble circumstances, are grieved because the American soldiers and marines have gone away and taken with them the money which they were wont to spend so freely, and the protection of a well-organized, disciplined force, backed by a great civilized nation, has been withdrawn.

"We were safer than we ever were before. We were well paid for our work. We could pass along the streets at any time, day or night, without fear of insult, when those big foreign soldiers guarded the city," they say. "And now they are gone and their dollars have gone and their kindness and protection have been taken from us."

These women, who, when the American occupation began, were bitter in their hatred of the invaders, and who were terribly frightened at the sight of the tall, khaki-clad soldiers, refuse to be comforted, for they know not what is in store for them and their city now and in the near future. The civil war which has been devastating such a large part of Mexico for so long and which has passed the city of Vera Cruz by heretofore, is now menacing the port.

In place of the clean-cut, straight-limbed, broad-shouldered men of the American forces who kept such perfect order in the town, and whose kindness was shown in a thousand ways, have come soldiers of another type, dark-skinned men and boys in every sort of uniform and in no uniform at all, many of them clad only in cotton

shirts and trousers, with ragged straw sombreros and barefooted, or wearing rawhide sandals, but all carrying rifles which came originally from Connecticut, and all loaded down with belts full of ammunition, also from the United States.

Escapes in War; Fall Fatal.

After escaping unscathed from a number of battles, when serving under the Russian colors, Joseph Kaminski deserted, made a perilous trip to a seaport, boarded a steamer as a stowaway, and came to America, only to meet death three days later at Pittsburgh, Pa. Kaminski was employed at a coal chute and was killed when he fell and was buried under tons of coal.

Puts Bell on Buzzard.

Last spring Delbert Smith, living southwest of Garden Grove, Iowa, happened to capture a young turkey buzzard in his feed lot, and he took a turkey bell, with his name, and fastened it to the bird. Recently Mr. Smith received the following letter from a man named Gust Anderson, of Owassa, Okla.:

DEAR SIR: Along about the 23d of October I noticed a large flock—about twenty-five—of buzzards flying about my hog lot, so I got my gun and went down where they were. One of them had a bell on it, so I shot it, and on the bell I found your name and address. And now I am writing to find out when, or in what year, you belled the bird. It must have been on the bird's neck quite a good while. Now please write me all about it, as I am anxious to know.

Lost Terrier Found With Woodchucks.

Ned, a pet terrier belonging to Charles Payne, of Bainbridge, Chenango County, N. Y., disappeared. As he was a pet of the children in the Payne family, search was made for him throughout the surrounding country, and advertisements were placed in newspapers, but no trace of him could be found.

The last trace of the dog was in tracks leading from the house to the river, in the light snow which had fallen the night the dog disappeared, and it was finally believed that he was drowned.

While Mr. Payne was walking along the bank of the river in the hope of discovering the body of the dog recently, he heard a faint bark. He investigated and discovered a woodchuck's hole.

Digging in a distance of five feet he found the dog and a family of five woodchucks. The dog had begun digging in the hole in search of prey, and as he progressed he piled the dirt up behind him until he was unable to get out.

The dog and the woodchucks were living in harmony. All he had eaten during the time of his imprisonment was some of the herbs and roots which the woodchucks had laid by for the winter.

Building Rock House.

James Homer, of Inez, Ky., who is hacking a four-room dwelling from a large rock, has been at work at his unusual building despite the cold weather, which has been below zero at times.

Homer has entered the rock six feet and has penetrated about five feet on either side of the entrance during the past month. His strange building is daily

visited by curious persons, and some have said that he is undoubtedly insane to start such a vast undertaking, but as Homer said in a previous interview:

"I know this is a vast undertaking, but I consider nothing is impossible to the man who has a will. 'Where there is a will there is a way,' you know. My rock building is causing a great deal of speculation as to when I will get it completed; some say if I should work every day I could not complete it in five years, but I am confident I will have it completed by 1916; then I will have a house party, which will cause the people of Rockcastle Creek to sit up and take notice. I intend to make each room twelve by fourteen feet, and when I get these rooms hacked out, I intend to lath and plaster them, so they can be papered."

Homer has his name and the date he began work picked out on the front of the rock near the intended door.

Conducts Turtle Farm in Back Yard.

Amos S. Hahn, who lives out on Church Street, Delaware City, Del., has 117 small snapping turtles which he expects to turn loose in the marshes in the spring, simply in the interest of sport. He and his cousin, Cecil C. Hahn, follow the custom annually of propagating snappers and turning them loose in the lowlands; so that the supply of turtles will not become exhausted.

Out of 200 eggs buried in the yard back of Amos Hahn's home, 137 snappers, about an inch long, were hatched. He has given away twenty of them. The others were placed in a shoe box to be shown to several persons.

The eggs were buried three or four inches deep. The baby turtles, born in October, are kept in a tub of water in the cellar. They require no feeding, and will not eat until spring, when they will be given a diet of worms and vegetable growth.

It will require at least ten years for the snappers to mature, according to Cecil Hahn. He has made observations of turtles marked and released on North East River, Md., which did not gain a pound a year. Twenty-five years' growth is required for a snapper to attain the weight of twelve pounds, Hahn estimates.

The Hahns say the snapper eventually will become extinct unless something is done to protect it. It is to try to perpetuate the turtle that they each year hatch and turn loose the little ones.

Officers Live in Luxury in Trenches.

Stories are coming in from all sources of the marvelous preparations made by the Germans to make a long stay in trenches in northern France. The officers' quarters especially are quite luxurious.

In surprise attacks on the Germans in the districts around Arras, the French captured several quick rivers and a large store of ammunition, and set free a large number of French prisoners. One of them, a wounded French engineer, said that much of the ground in front of the German trenches was mined, and that he tumbled across one of the electric wires during the night attack, and then spent three hours searching around and cutting any other wires he could find and tracing the ends of them to the batteries in the trenches. While doing this he was shot in the neck.

The engineer expressed great admiration for the way in which the German engineers did their work, and was in a high state of good humor because he had found what

he called an electrician's "parlor" in one of the trenches, all lined with timber balks and full of engineering requisites, wireless-telegraphic spare parts, and so forth. A well-paced charge soon reduced this chamber to ruins, as the trench, though temporarily evacuated by the Germans, was not in a good position to be held by the French.

Letter Takes a Long Journey.

A message to his wife from an Austrian soldier taken prisoner by the Russians passed through Chicago Friday over a route that will cover 15,600 miles or more before the missive reaches its destination, though it was written a little more than 3,000 miles from the soldier's home in Milowka, a city of the Austrian province of Galicia.

The writer is Stanislaw Korman, of the First Gracswar Corps of the Austrian army, who was taken prisoner by the Russians in the battle on the River San, near Sandomierz, September 15th, and is now imprisoned at Koorzan, western Siberia.

Finding it impossible to send a letter directly to his wife because of the conditions of war, Korman finally conceived the idea of writing to his friend, A. Kedzior, of Chicago, inclosing a brief letter to Mrs. Korman, apprising her of his capture and the news that he is well. Mr. Kedzior forwarded the letters to Mrs. Korman at once.

Man, Thirty-five, Buys His First Suit.

Unable to resist the bargains offered in a clothing sale conducted at Gentry, Mo., LeRoy Smith, who lives west of town, purchased a suit of clothes for himself. So did many others buy clothes, for that matter, but the remarkable thing about Smith's purchase was that it is the first suit of clothes he has ever possessed, although he is thirty-five years of age.

Smith is known as an eccentric character, and all his life his apparel has consisted of the common workman's garb: blue overalls and jumper. He has always considered these good enough to wear to church or to attend any other gathering, and so accustomed were his friends and acquaintances to seeing him thus arrayed that when he had donned his new suit, after treating himself to a shave and hair cut, they failed to recognize him.

Giant Shirt Made to Order.

A shirt that has a twenty-one-inch collar and is sixty-one inches around the chest is on display in a Junction City, Kan., store. It was made to order for James Brewster, who lives here and is probably the biggest man in the State.

Lionesses Create Panic.

Men ran, women fainted, children shrieked, and panic prevailed generally when six full-grown lionesses, which had just been put through an exhibition in a New York theater, escaped as they were being transferred from their show cage to their living quarters. The big beasts bounded from the stage and five of them roamed from gallery to basement of the theater. The sixth escaped into the crowded street. Policemen pursued her into the hallway of a near-by apartment house and shot her.

When the lionesses escaped, hundreds of persons in the theater fled to the exits. Mothers, delayed by gathering up their children, crowded into corners and places of supposed safety. Scores fainted, and many, stunned by the sight of the animals among them, sat transfixed in

their seats. With the exception of Alice, the lioness which was killed, none of the beasts displayed great ferocity. They were rounded up in the lobby after the last of the audience got out.

There was a wild scare on the streets when Alice appeared. "Man-eating Beasts, Controlled by a Woman's Hypnotic Eye," the lionesses were described by the flaming posters on the theater billboards. And here was one of them at large on a crowded street corner. However, Alice was chased into the apartment house and shot. In shooting at her the policemen wounded one of their own number, and two other officers were slightly wounded by the claws of the beast before she was subdued.

Mme. Marie Andree, trainer of the lionesses, was arrested, but the court freed her, as no death had been caused, and the only person severely injured, Police Sergeant Daniel Glynn, had been shot by a policeman.

Canadian Boys' Brigades.

From St. John's, N. F., with a population of 30,000 about 1,250 men have enlisted for service in the British army and navy, 1,000 as soldiers and 250 as sailors. This is an average of one in every twenty-five of the population—an average that so far as is known here has been exceeded only at Liverpool, where one person in every fifteen has enlisted.

The ability of St. John's to put so large a force in the field is ascribed by recruiting officers to the fact that for twenty years denominational schools and colleges have maintained boys' brigades. These number ordinarily about 1,000 youths. When the call came for men to go to the front, as a military contribution from Great Britain's most ancient colony, four-fifths of those who offered their services were either present or former members of the boys' brigades, and every officer of the regiment has been trained in one of these organizations.

A Postmistress at Nineteen.

Miss Ethel Melendy, nineteen years old, has been named postmistress at Elbing, Kan., to replace her father, E. W. Melendy, who has held the office for eight years. Miss Melendy gained the place through a civil-service examination, in which she won over a number of older men competitors. She is a leading figure in social and church affairs in Elbing and has helped her father several years in the post office.

Stories the Walls Tell.

A correspondent writing to the London *Evening News*, says:

"The town of Bergen-op-Zoom, Holland, is full of heart-breaking pictures to-day, but to me the most pathetic of all is the writing on the walls. It is a tremendous tribute to the good-heartedness of the Dutch that they do not mind their scrupulously clean houses being defaced for a moment in this way. Scribbled in white chalk all over the walls, shutters, fences, windows tree trunks, and pavements, are the addresses of the frenzied refugees, trying to get in touch with their lost relations.

"On all the trees, too, little bits of paper are pinned, covered with addresses and messages, such as 'The Family Montchier can be found in the Church of St. Joseph, under the grand altar,' or 'Anna de Cart with Pierre and Marie and grandmother are in the school of music.'

"Les Sœurs Martell et grandmère are in the Church

of the Holy Martyrs.' 'La Famille Deminn are in the fifth tent of the encampment on the artillery ground.' 'M. and Mme. Ardige and their seven children are in the Comedy Theater.' So closely are the walls and shutters and windows and trees scribbled over by now that the three hundred thousand addresses are most of them becoming indistinguishable."

Hog Nearly Eight Feet Long.

A hog weighing 1,200 pounds and less than two years old is the record in swine raising made by Colonel W. E. Wimpey. The hog is 7 feet 7 inches long, 39½ inches high, and 74½ inches around the body.

The express on this hog from Clarkson, Ga., to Augusta, where it took prizes at the fair, was \$24.04. Colonel Wimpey is proud of this hog and says he hopes to exhibit it at the next international live-stock show at Chicago.

Watterson's Turkey Story.

Henry Watterson, the Louisville journalist, told this story at a recent dinner party:

"One day when I was the city editor of a small newspaper, a fine turkey was left at the office. We all hankered after the bird, but the editor finally claimed it, took it home, and had it cooked for dinner. The next day a letter was handed in to him, which he opened and read:

"Mr. Editor, I sent you a turkey yesterday which had been the cause of much dispute among us. To settle a bet, will you please state in to-morrow's issue what the turkey died of?"

Nimrod to Wear Red Trousers.

Charles Lindberg, of Blaney, Mich., probably never heard the story of the fellow who tried to steal a coat from Solomon Cohen, the pawnbroker. The fellow had the coat on, but when Cohen reached up for the rest of the suit, his customer ran from the store and started down the street at a rapid gait. Cohen ran after the fellow, shouting "Stop thief!" A policeman joined in the chase, and, drawing his gun, was about to shoot at the thief. Here's where Cohen got excited. "Hey, officer!" he shouted, "shoot him in the pants—the coat is mine."

But to return to Lindberg.

When Lindberg went hunting a week or two ago, he purchased a brightly hued coat, to prevent hunters from mistaking him for a deer. While out in the woods, he had occasion to stoop over to pick up something, when—bang!—he received a charge of shot from the rear. He now swears he will wear red trousers when he goes into the woods again. It's fierce, he says, the carelessness of some deer hunters.

Some Interesting Facts.

The warden of a Georgia prison has been puzzled by an order to give one of his prisoners a nineteen days' allowance on his sentence. As the sentence is for life, the order is difficult to carry out.

According to an Italian mathematician, all the people in the world could stand comfortably in an area of 500 square miles, while a graveyard about the size of Colorado would bury all of them.

The unusual size of some game fish caught in irrigation ditches in Washington led to the belief that they

had fattened themselves by eating alfalfa, and an investigation proved the theory correct.

The areas of the nine Canadian provinces in square miles are: Quebec, 706,834; Ontario, 407,252; British Columbia, 357,600; Alberta, 253,540; Saskatchewan, 250,650; Manitoba, 251,832; New Brunswick, 27,985; Nova Scotia, 21,428, and Prince Edward Island, 2,184.

Some of the spiders of Java have webs so strong that a knife is required to cut them.

Many of the largest Japanese warships have been equipped with wireless telephones, which operate successfully for distances up to 100 miles.

Moses Alexander, new governor of Idaho, is the first Hebrew ever elected to the governorship of an American State.

Germany is credited with having 100,000 motor vehicles in military use.



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